

"Astonishing!" —BRYAN KONIETZKO, AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER



THE **STONE HEART**  
THE NAMELESS CITY  
**FAITH ERIN HICKS**  
COLOR BY JORDIE BELLAIRE



YISUN



RIVER OF LIVES



THE NAMELESS CITY



LIRO

THE *STONE HEART*







On our eighth day in the Nameless City, my traveling companion happened upon some of his people, far from their homelands.



They had traveled miles to buy and sell in the City. It was a common story, repeated by many we spoke to.



The Nameless City is different from the many cities we passed through on our journey down the River of Lives.



The City does not have a single population. Rather it is filled with many different people from many different nations.



I had to ask: who does the City belong to? Who are its rightful people?





What remained were the people  
who lived in the City. Many  
people. Many different nations.



All called the  
City their home.



And who could say that  
any of them were wrong?







# THE STONE HEART

THE NAMELESS CITY

FAITH ERIN HICKS

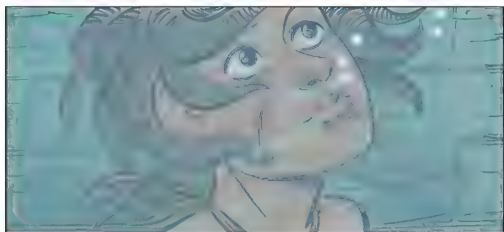
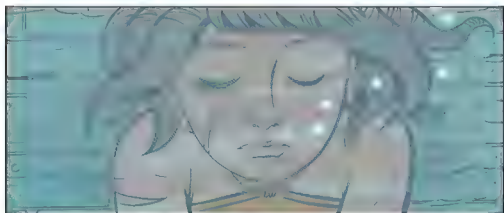
COLOR BY JORDIE BELLAIRE



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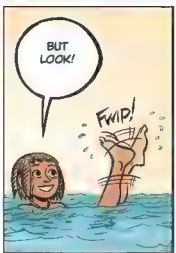
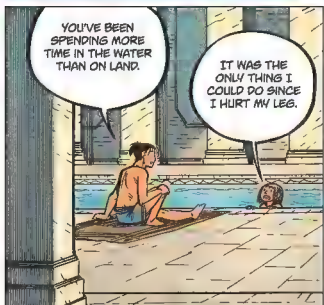
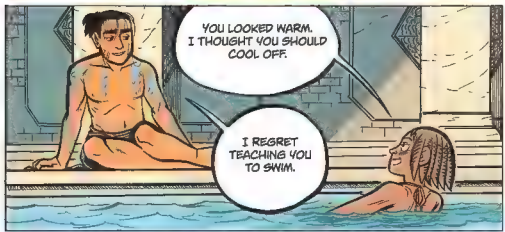
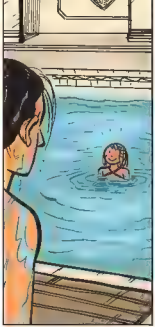
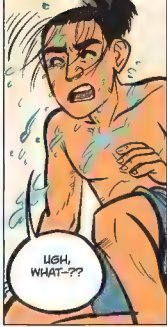
First Second  
NEW YORK

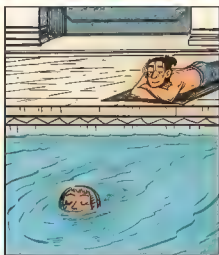
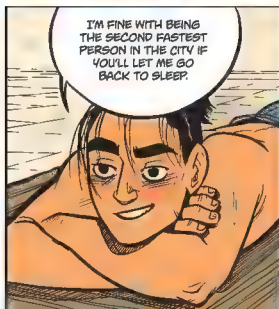
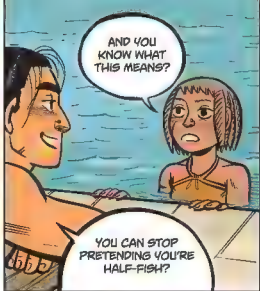
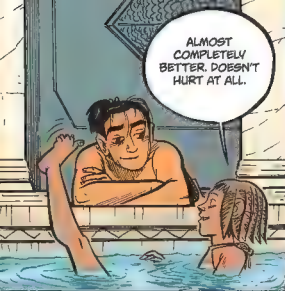


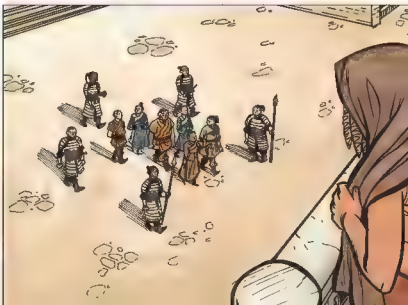
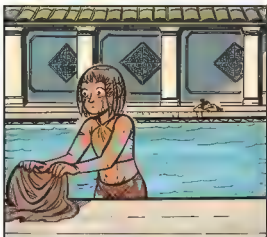
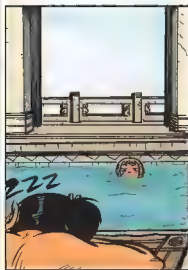
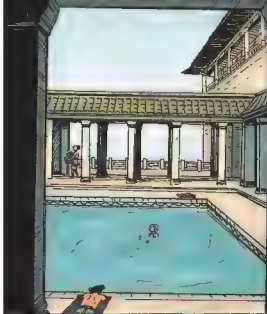


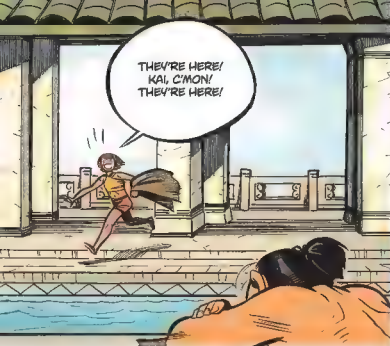












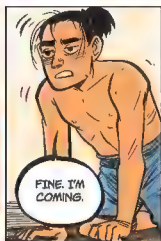
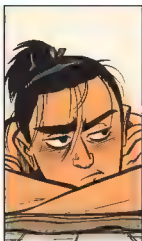
THEY'RE HERE!  
KAI, C'MON!  
THEY'RE HERE!



CAN'T  
SLEEPING.



COME ON!  
YOU HAVE TO  
MEET SHONA!



FINE. I'M  
COMING.





IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS SINCE THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. DO THE GUARDS STILL HAVE TO FOLLOW US EVERYWHERE?



YES, ERZI.



IT'S NOT THAT THE PALACE COULDN'T USE MORE SECURITY, BUT ALWAYS BEING FOLLOWED MAKES ME FEEL...



FEEL WHAT?

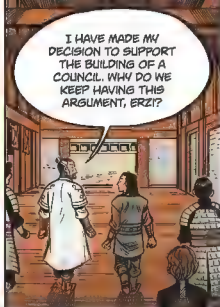


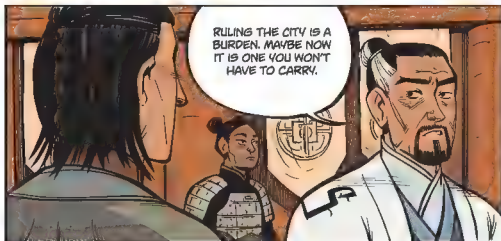
LIKE A PRISONER IN MY OWN HOME.

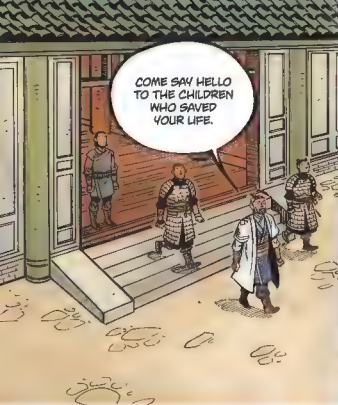


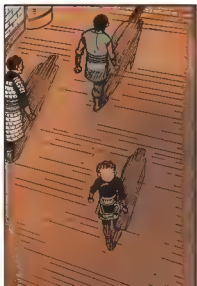
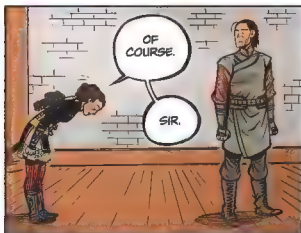
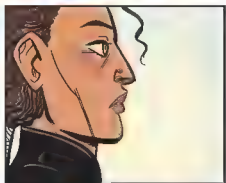
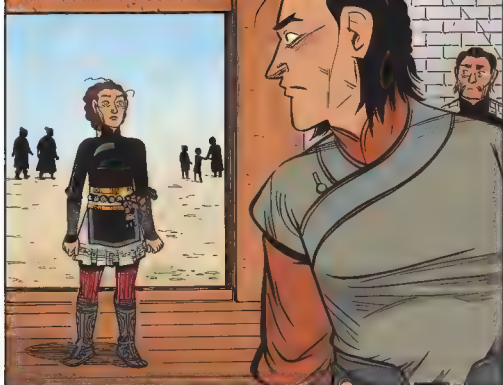
THINGS WILL BE CHANGING SOON.

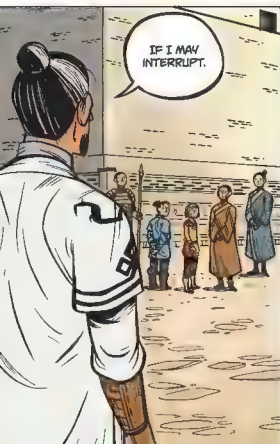


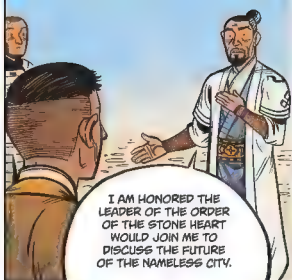




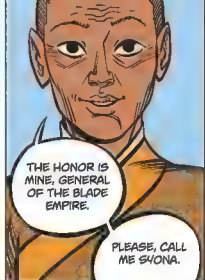








I AM HONORED THE  
LEADER OF THE ORDER  
OF THE STONE HEART  
WOULD JOIN ME TO  
DISCUSS THE FUTURE  
OF THE NAMELESS CITY.



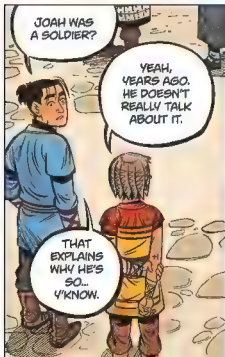
THE HONOR IS  
MINE, GENERAL  
OF THE BLADE  
EMPIRE.

PLEASE, CALL  
ME SVONA.



I THOUGHT  
JOAH WOULD  
BE THE MONKS'  
REPRESENTATIVE  
ON MY DAD'S  
COUNCIL.

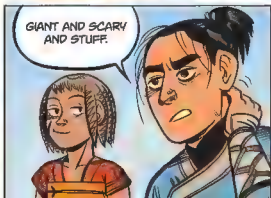
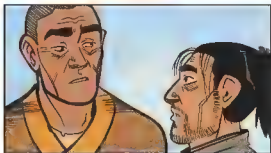
NO, HE USED TO  
BE A SOLDIER. I  
GUESS IT'S A RULE  
THAT SOMEONE  
WHO USED TO FIGHT  
CAN'T SPEAK FOR  
THE MONASTERY.



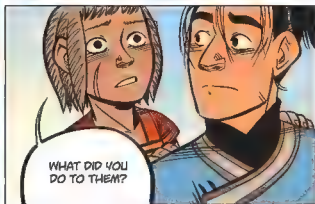
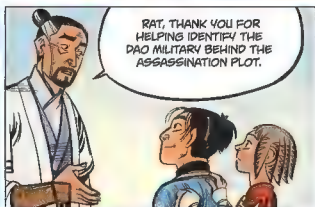
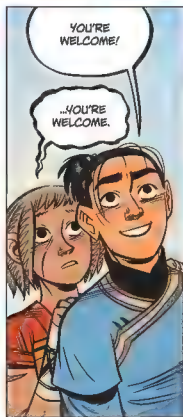
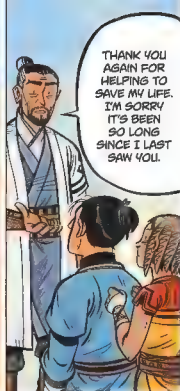
JOAH WAS  
A SOLDIER?

YEAH,  
YEARS AGO.  
HE DOESN'T  
REALLY TALK  
ABOUT IT.

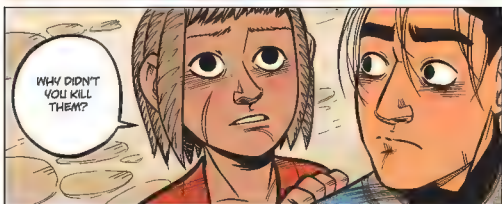
THAT  
EXPLAINS  
WHY HE'S  
SO...  
Y'KNOW.

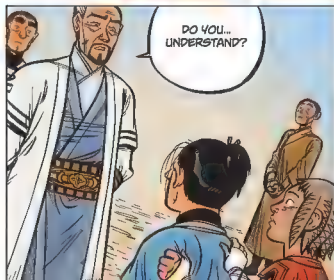
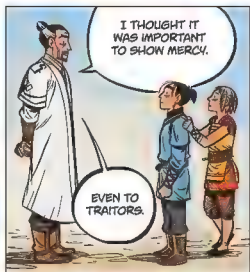


GIANT AND SCARY  
AND STUFF.

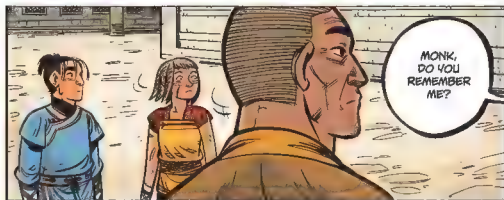


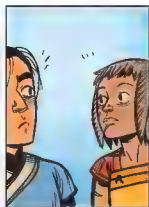
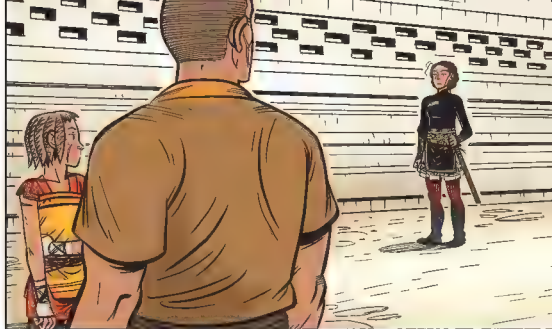






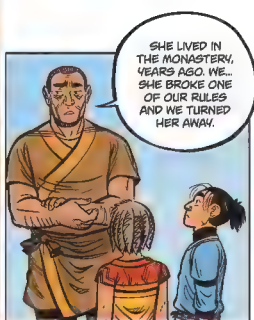




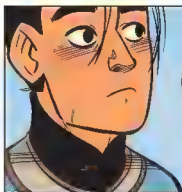




HOW DO YOU  
KNOW MURA?



SHE LIVED IN  
THE MONASTERY,  
YEARS AGO. WE...  
SHE BROKE ONE  
OF OUR RULES  
AND WE TURNED  
HER AWAY.



WHAT DID  
SHE DO?

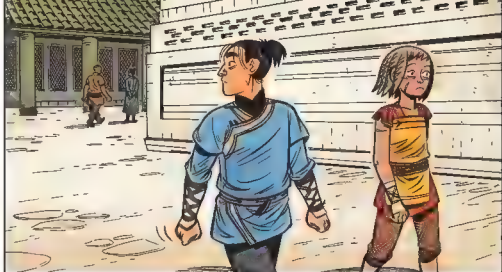


TRIED  
TO STEAL  
FROM US.

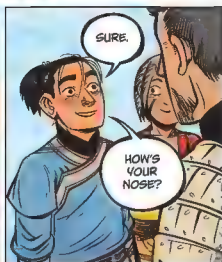
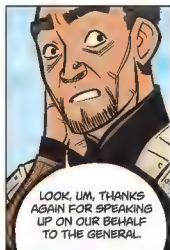
WE SHOULD  
HAVE BEEN MORE  
LENIENT. SHE WAS  
A CHILD WHO MADE  
A MISTAKE.

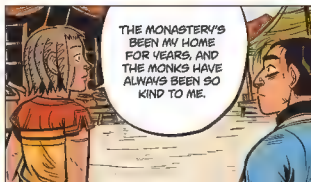
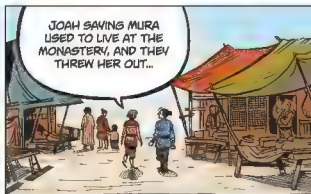
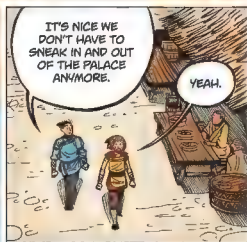
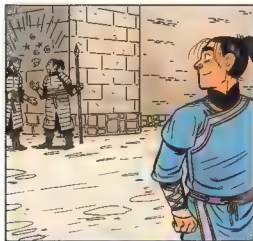
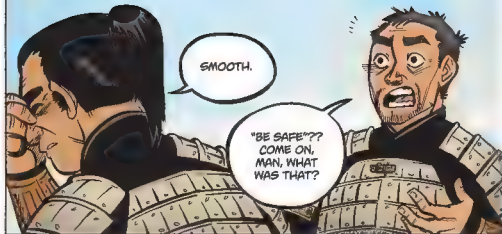


I'M GLAD  
SHE'S OKAY.

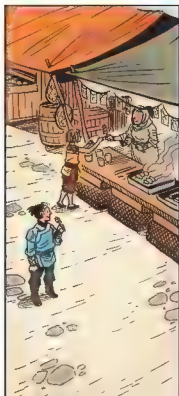
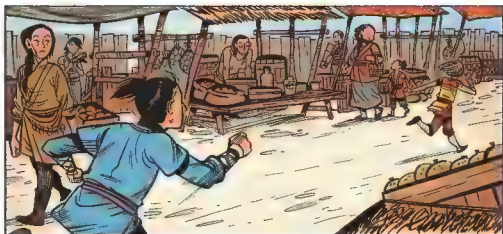
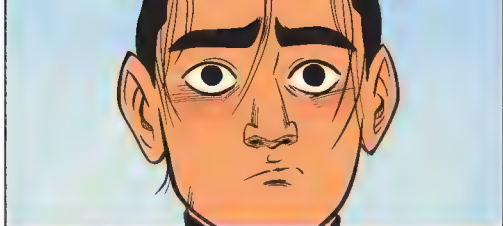


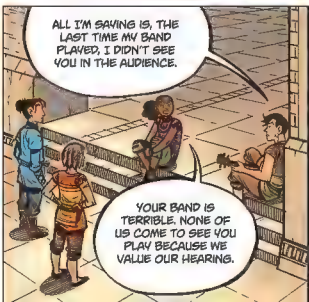


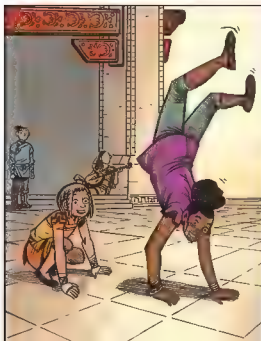
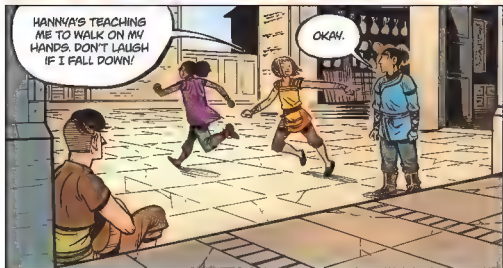
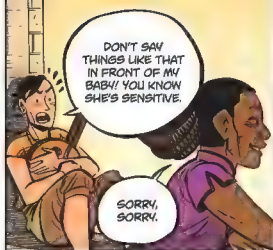




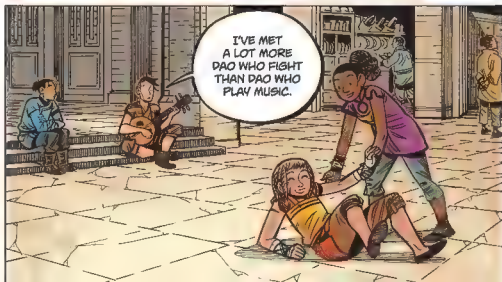
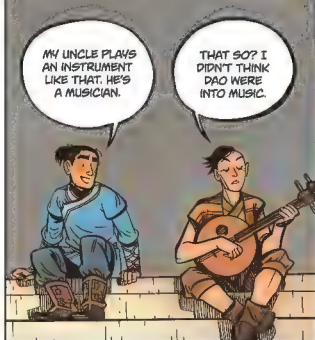




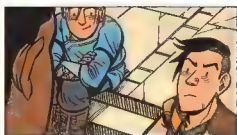
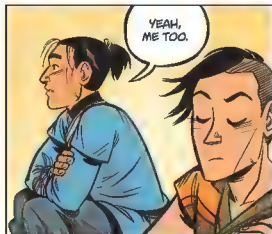


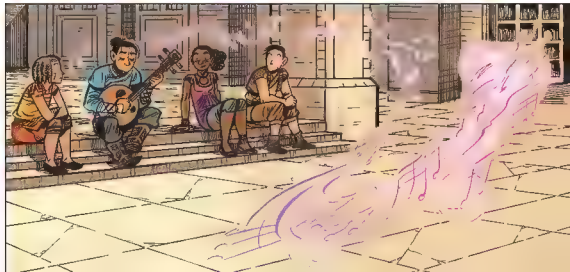
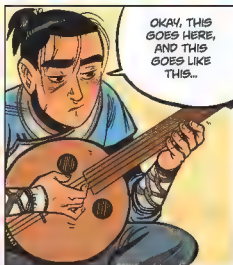
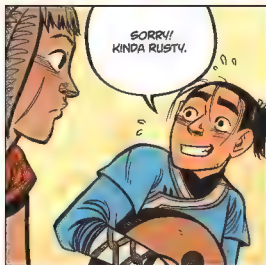
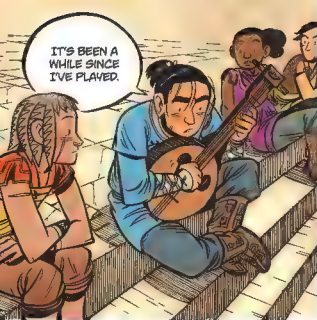


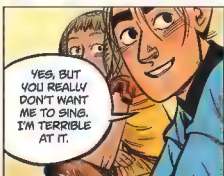
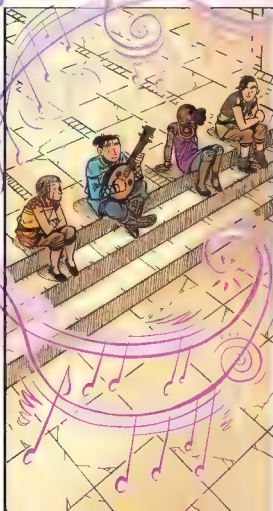
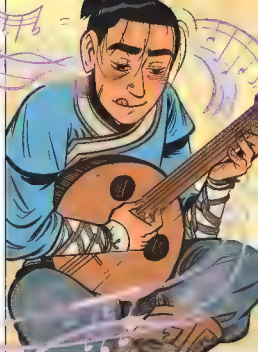
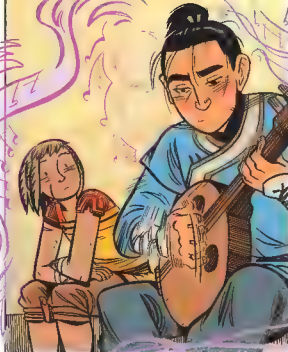


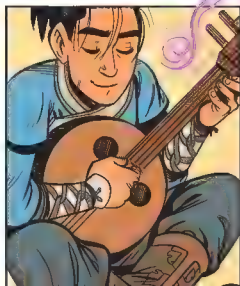
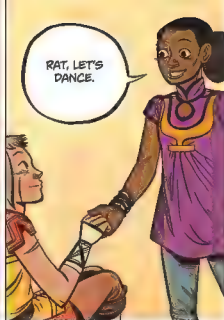








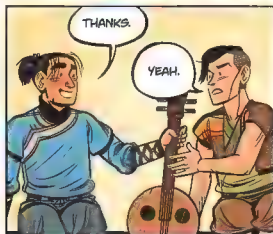
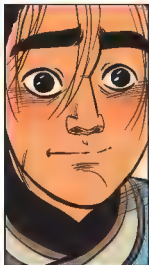






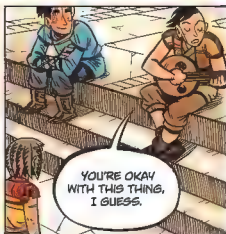


HAHAHAHA!



THANKS.

YEAH.



YOU'RE OKAY  
WITH THIS THING,  
I GUESS.



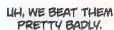
WHAT'S THE  
SONG ABOUT?  
I'VE NEVER HEARD  
IT BEFORE.

OH,  
UM...





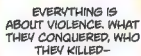
IT'S ABOUT  
A BATTLE  
BETWEEN  
THE YISUN  
AND THE DAO.



LIH, WE BEAT THEM  
PRETTY BADLY.



PFT.  
EVEN DAO  
MUSIC  
IS ABOUT  
CONQUERING.



EVERYTHING IS  
ABOUT VIOLENCE. WHAT  
THEY CONQUERED, WHO  
THEY KILLED—



INIKO,  
STOP IT.

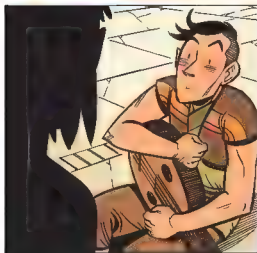
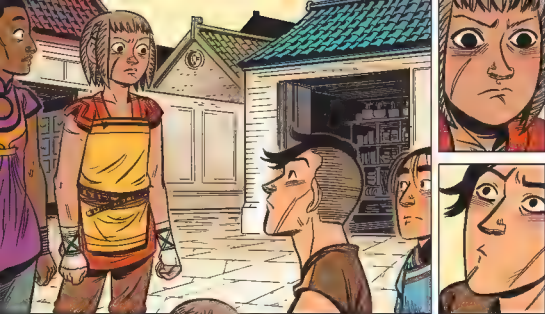


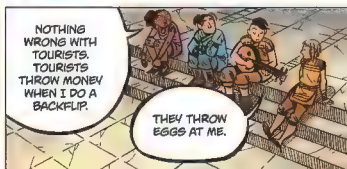
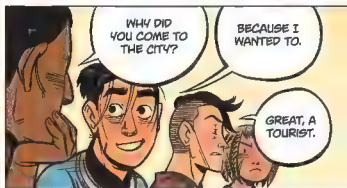
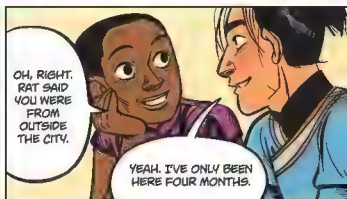
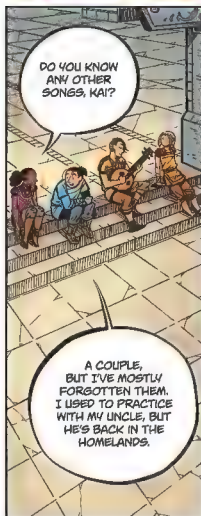
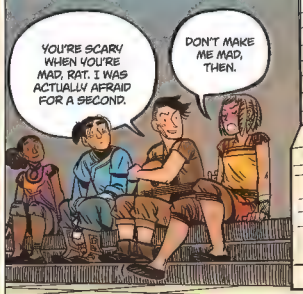
I'M JUST  
SAVING—

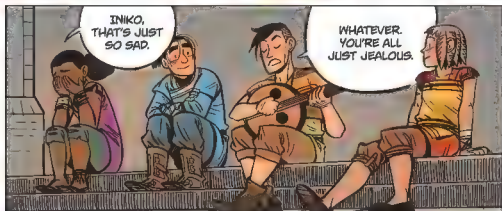
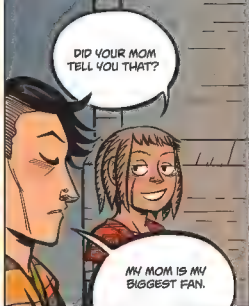
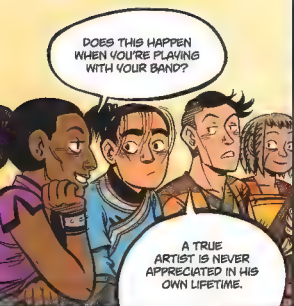


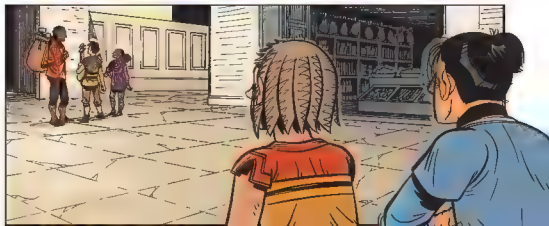
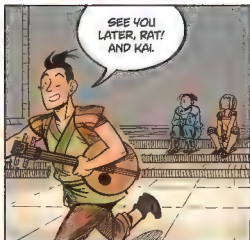
AND I  
SAID  
STOP IT.

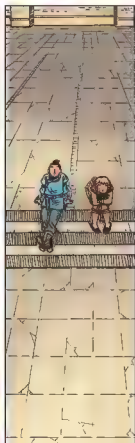
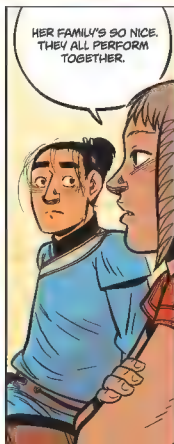
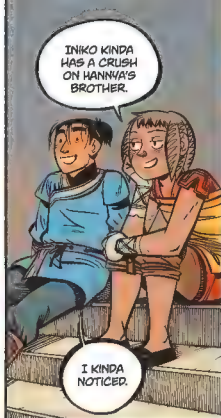






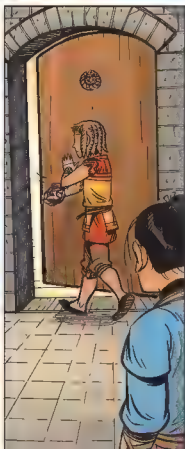
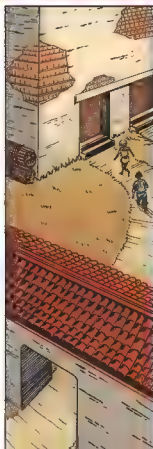
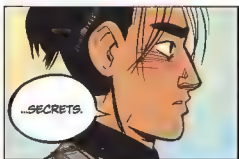


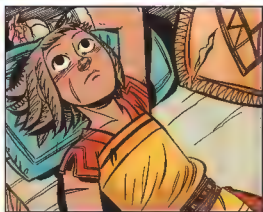
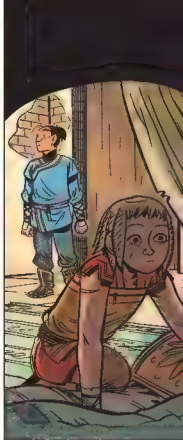
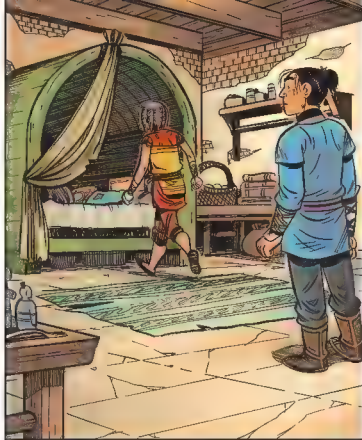


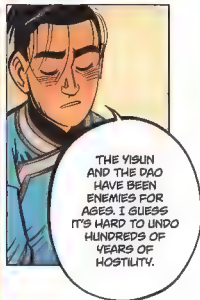
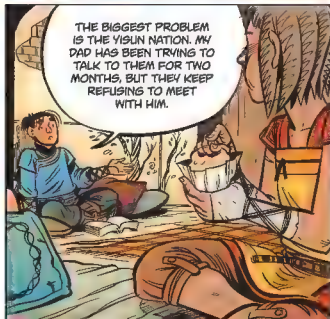
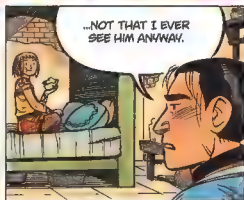
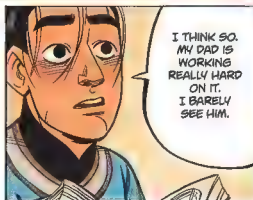
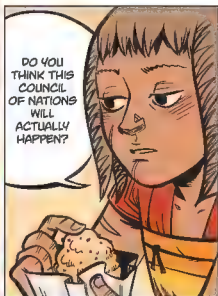
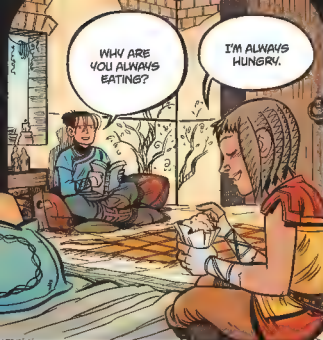


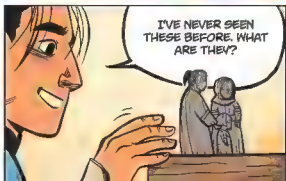
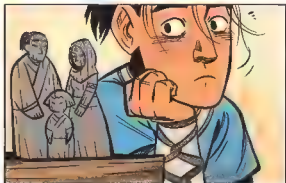
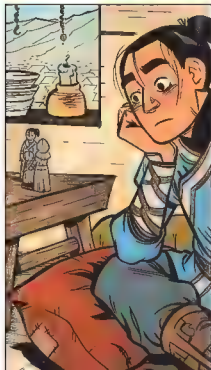
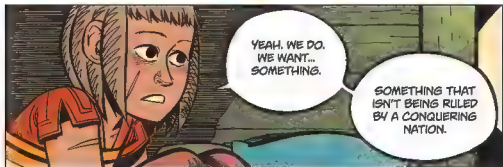
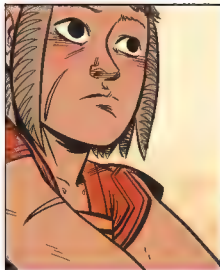


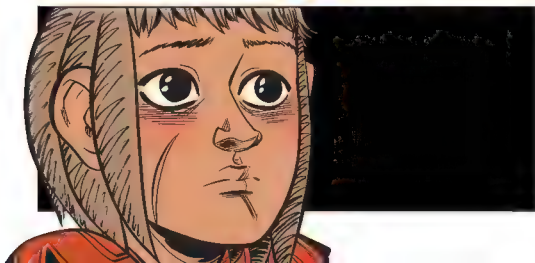
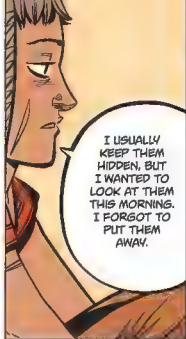










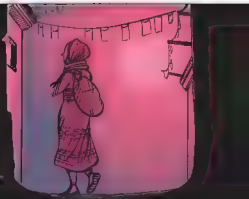




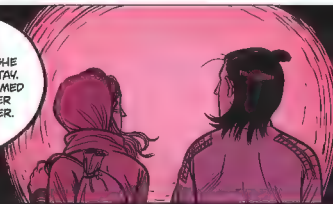
MY FATHER  
WAS FROM THE  
YISUN NATION, LIKE  
JOAH. BUT HE'D LIVED  
HIS WHOLE LIFE  
IN THE CITY.



MY MOTHER  
WAS FROM AN ISLAND  
NATION IN THE WEST.  
I DON'T KNOW ITS  
NAME. SHE MET MY  
FATHER WHEN SHE WAS  
TRAVELING THROUGH  
THE CITY.



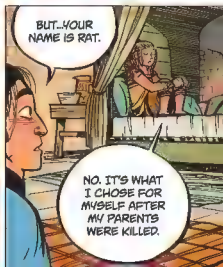
THEY FELL  
IN LOVE AND SHE  
DECIDED TO STAY.  
MY MOTHER NAMED  
ME AFTER HER  
GRANDMOTHER.



YOUR GREAT-  
GRANDMOTHER  
WAS NAMED  
RAT?



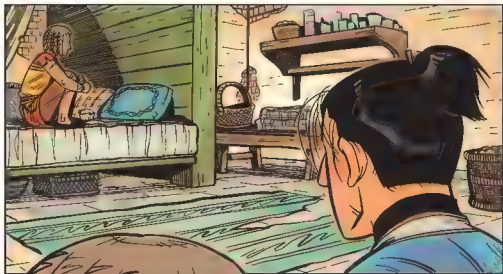
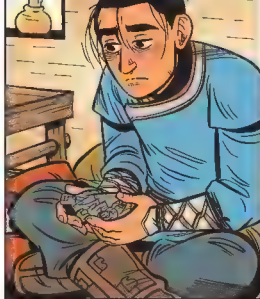
NO. WHO  
NAMES  
THEIR KID  
RAT?



BUT...YOUR  
NAME IS RAT.

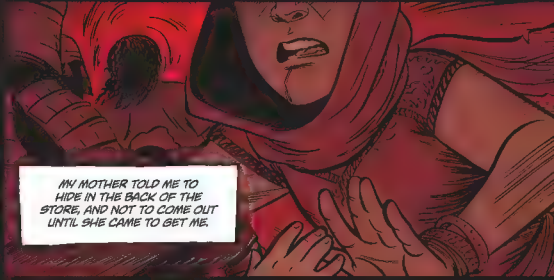
NO. IT'S WHAT  
I CHOSE FOR  
MYSELF AFTER  
MY PARENTS  
WERE KILLED.







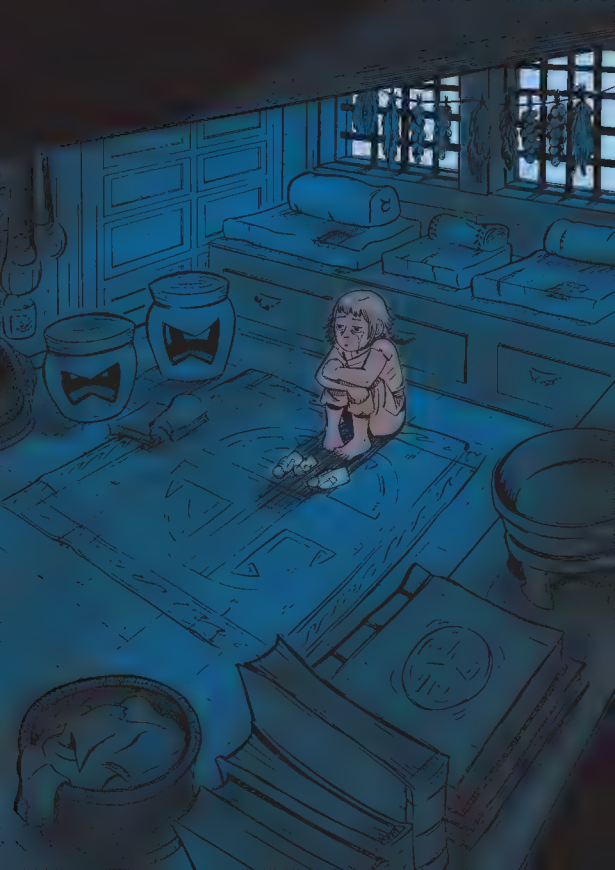
ONE DAY DAO SOLDIERS  
CAME TO OUR SHOP. THEY  
TRIED TO ARREST MY DAD.



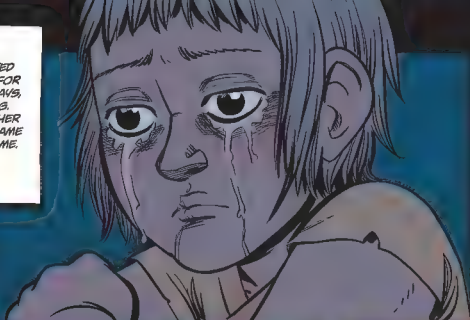
MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO  
HIDE IN THE BACK OF THE  
STORE, AND NOT TO COME OUT  
UNTIL SHE CAME TO GET ME.



I THINK MY DAD FOUGHT  
THE SOLDIERS. MAYBE IF HE  
HADN'T, MY PARENTS WOULD  
STILL BE ALIVE.

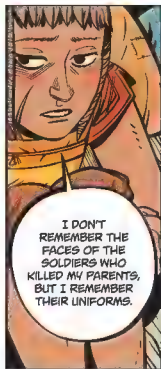
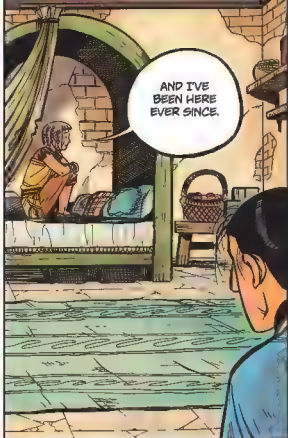


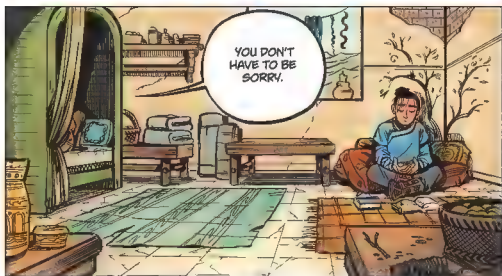
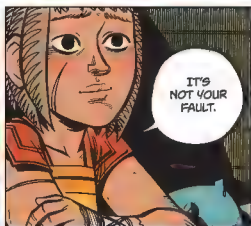
I STAYED  
HIDDEN FOR  
THREE DAYS,  
WAITING.  
MY MOTHER  
NEVER CAME  
TO GET ME.



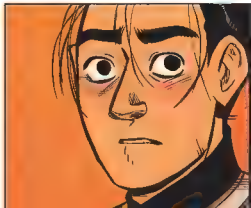
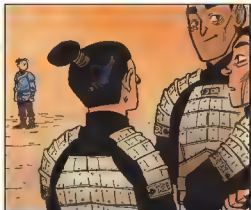
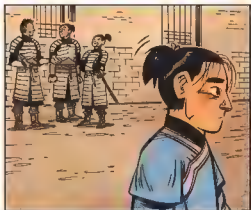
SO I WENT  
TO THE STONE  
HEART FOR HELP.

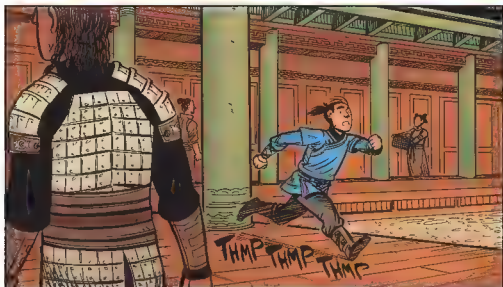




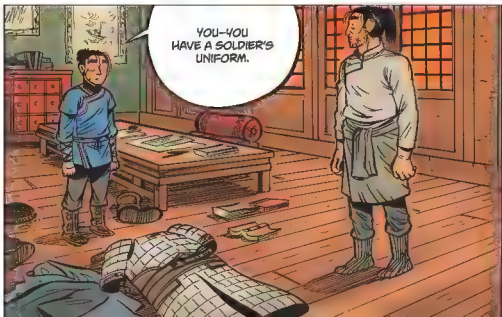
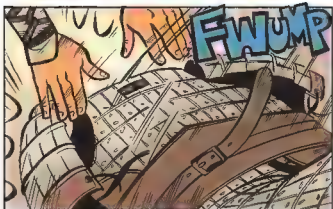
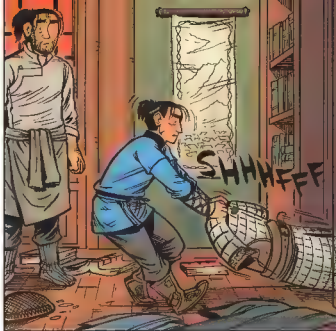




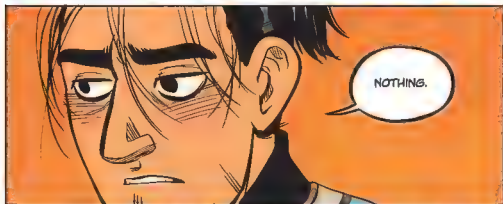




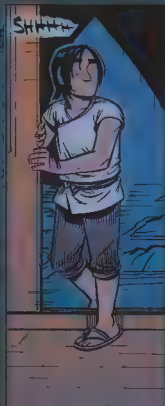
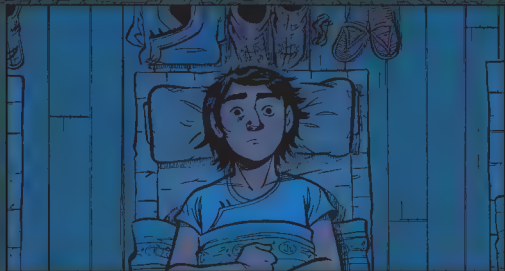
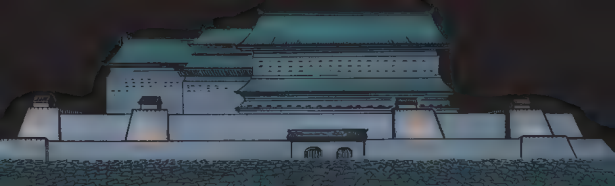


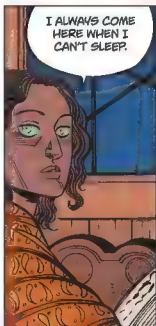
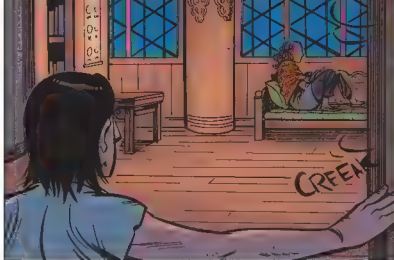












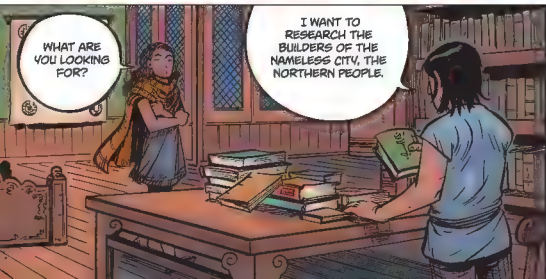
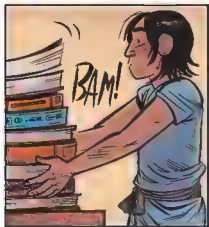
I ALWAYS COME  
HERE WHEN I  
CAN'T SLEEP.



HOW OFTEN  
IS THAT?



EVERY NIGHT.

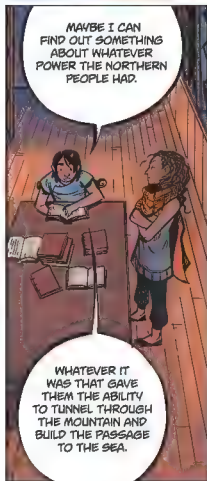
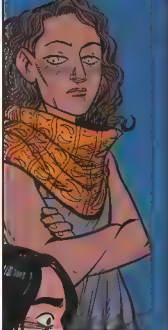


WHAT ARE  
YOU LOOKING  
FOR?

I WANT TO  
RESEARCH THE  
BUILDERS OF THE  
NAMELESS CITY, THE  
NORTHERN PEOPLE.



I WANT TO  
DO SOMETHING TO  
HELP MY DAD'S PLAN  
FOR A COUNCIL  
OF NATIONS.

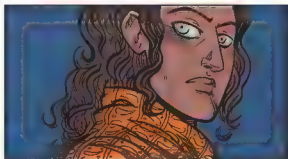


MAYBE I CAN  
FIND OUT SOMETHING  
ABOUT WHATEVER  
POWER THE NORTHERN  
PEOPLE HAD.

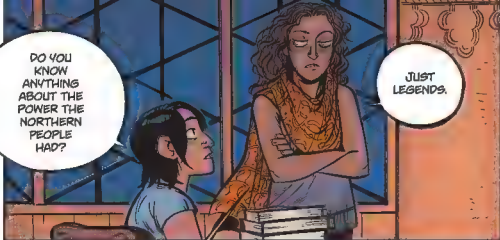
WHATEVER IT  
WAS THAT GAVE  
THEM THE ABILITY  
TO TUNNEL THROUGH  
THE MOUNTAIN AND  
BUILD THE PASSAGE  
TO THE SEA.



MAYBE IF  
THE DAO HAD  
THEIR POWER, WE  
COULD MAKE THE  
OTHER NATIONS OF  
THE WORLD JOIN  
THE COUNCIL.




WE COULD  
MAKE A BETTER  
FUTURE FOR  
THE CITY.




DO YOU  
KNOW  
ANYTHING  
ABOUT THE  
POWER THE  
NORTHERN  
PEOPLE  
HAD?

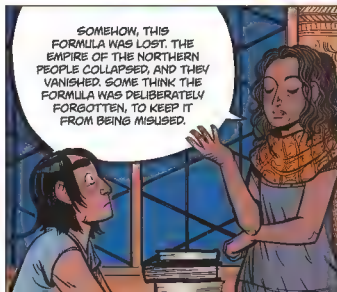
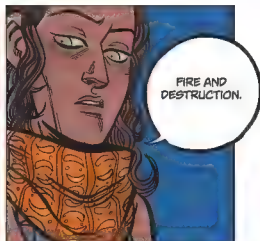
JUST  
LEGENDS.



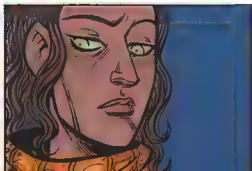
SOME SAY THE  
NORTHERN PEOPLE  
HAD THE ABILITY TO  
CONTROL THE ENERGY  
OF THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF.  
THEY CREATED THE  
PASSAGE BY WILLING  
IT INTO BEING.

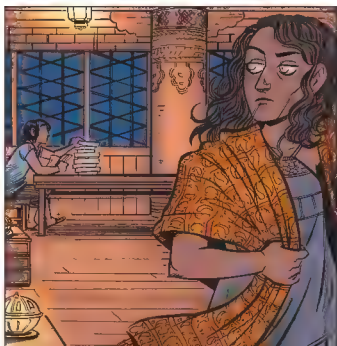


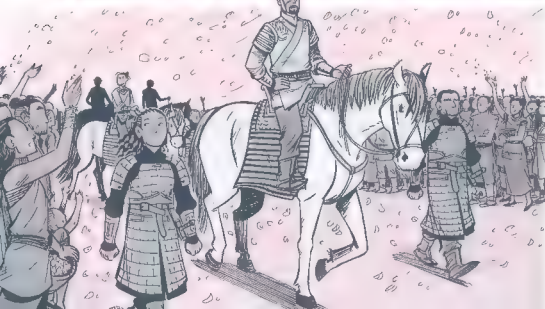
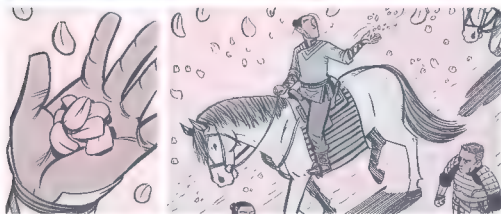
OTHERS BELIEVE  
THEY COMMANDED  
A LEGION OF FLYING  
CREATURES, WHO TORE  
A HOLE IN THE MOUNTAIN  
WITH THEIR CLAWS.





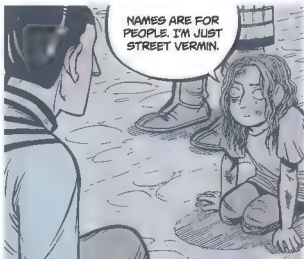
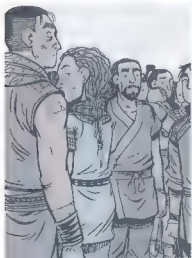
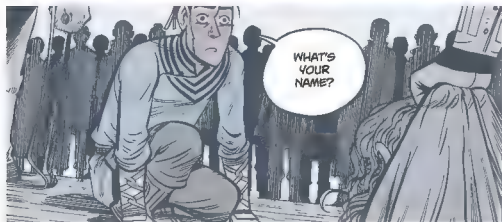
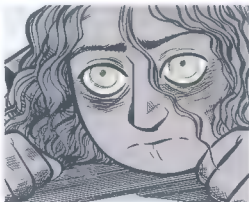
















NO ONE IS  
STREET VERMIN.  
UNDER DAO LAW, ALL  
THE PEOPLE OF THE  
CITY ARE EQUAL.



YOU'RE VERY  
STUPID IF YOU THINK  
THAT'S TRUE.



THAT'S THE PRINCE OF  
THE DAO EMPIRE YOU'RE  
SPEAKING TO, YOU—

STOP.

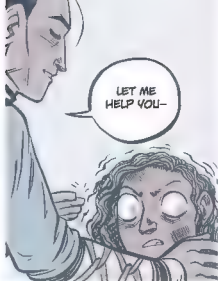
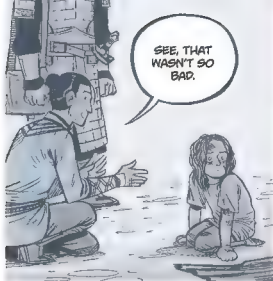


ALL I'M ASKING  
FOR IS YOUR NAME.  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO  
TELL ME ANYTHING  
ELSE IF YOU DON'T  
WANT TO.

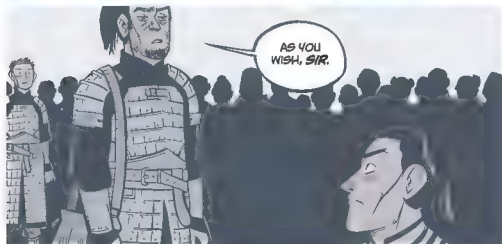
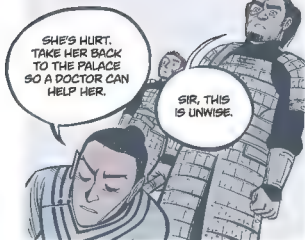
JUST  
YOUR  
NAME.

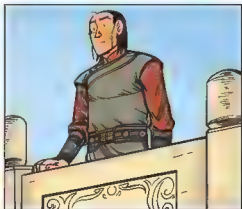
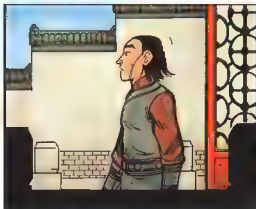
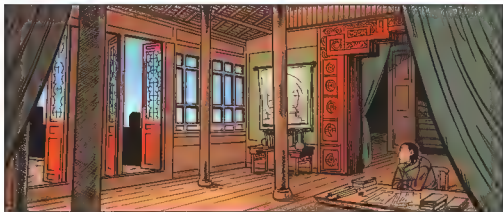


MURA.







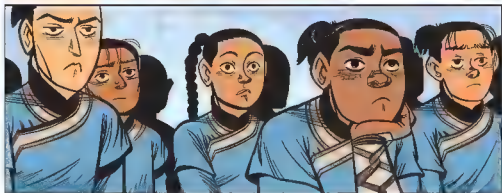




YOU KIDS HAVE  
HAD IT EASY UP  
TILL NOW.



BUT I'M  
HERE TO  
TEACH YOU  
ABOUT BECOMING  
REAL WARRIORS  
FOR THE EMPIRE.



THE DAO EMPIRE  
HAS SEEN A LOT  
OF PEACE RECENTLY.  
A LOT OF SOLDIERS  
SITTING AROUND,  
GETTING SOFT.



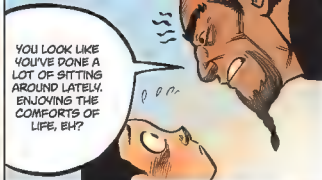
THAT STOPS NOW!  
I'M GOING TO SQUEEZE  
EVERY LAST DROP OF  
SOFTNESS OUT OF YOU.





YOU THERE!

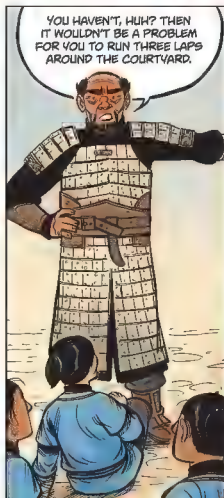
SIR!



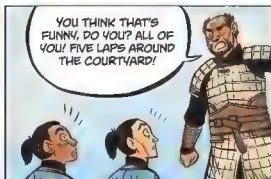
YOU LOOK LIKE  
YOU'VE DONE A  
LOT OF SITTING  
AROUND LATELY.  
ENJOYING THE  
COMFORTS OF  
LIFE, EH?



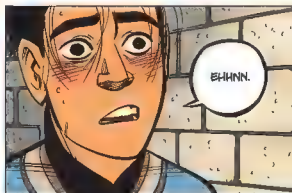
NO, SIR,  
I HAVEN'T!  
I PROMISE!

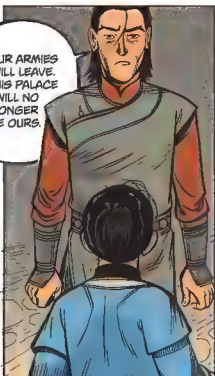
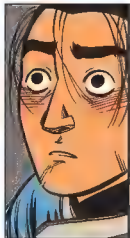
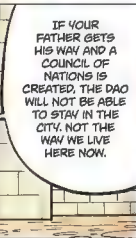
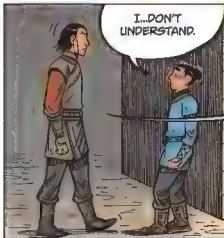
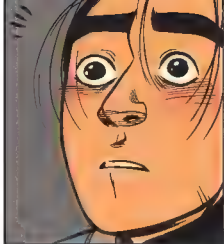


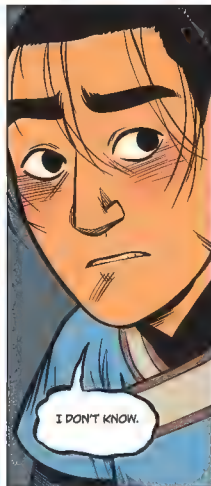
YOU HAVEN'T, HUH? THEN  
IT WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM  
FOR YOU TO RUN THREE LAPS  
AROUND THE COURTYARD.

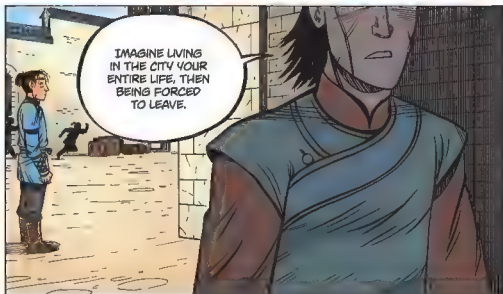


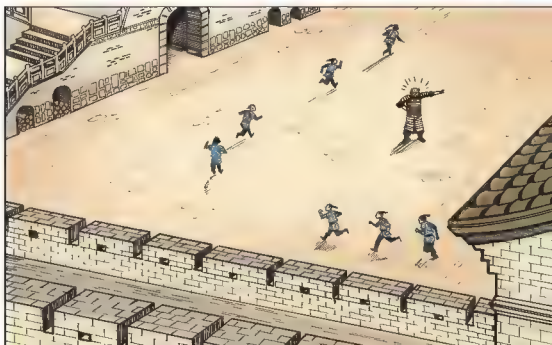
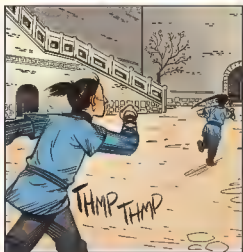
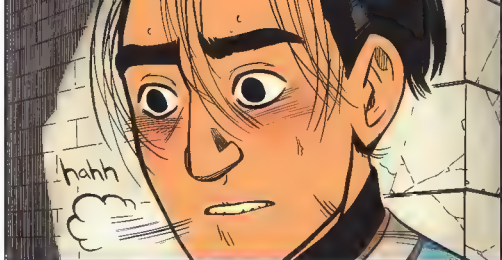
YOU THINK THAT'S  
FUNNY, DO YOU? ALL OF  
YOU! FIVE LAPS  
AROUND  
THE COURTYARD!



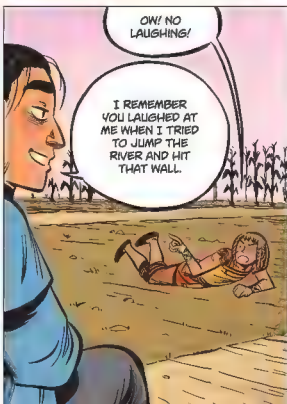
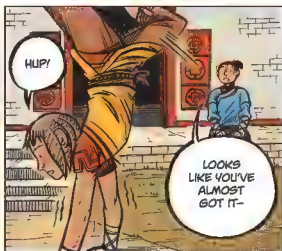
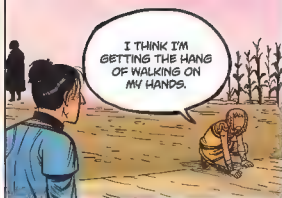


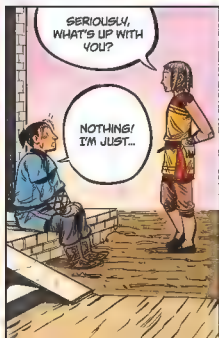
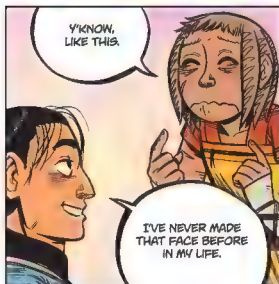
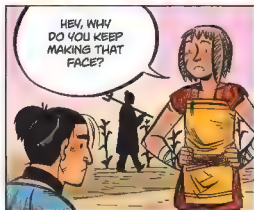


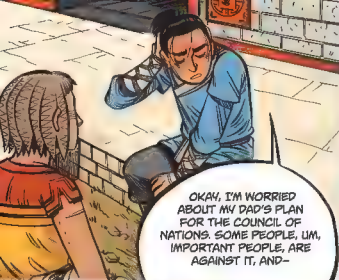




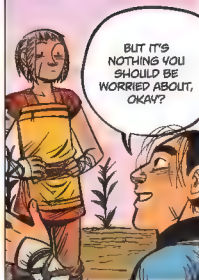




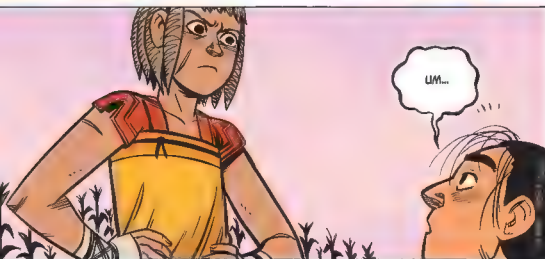




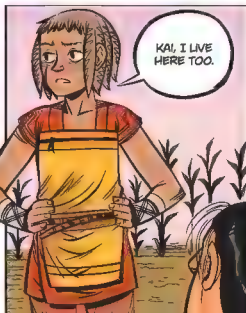
OKAY, I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY DAD'S PLAN FOR THE COUNCIL OF NATIONS. SOME PEOPLE, UM, IMPORTANT PEOPLE, ARE AGAINST IT, AND—



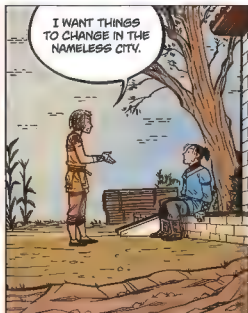
BUT IT'S NOTHING YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT, OKAY?



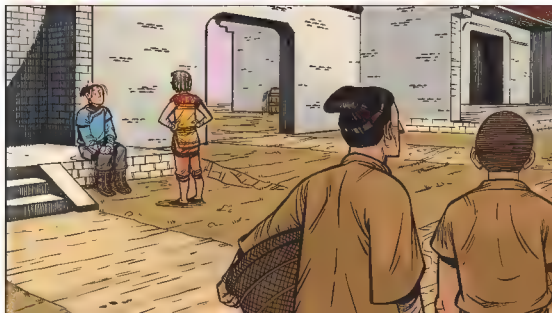
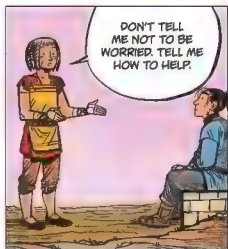
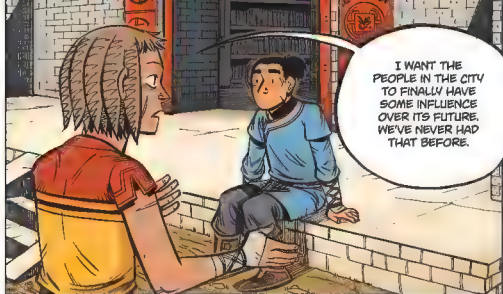
UM...

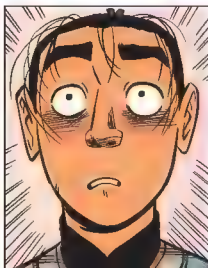
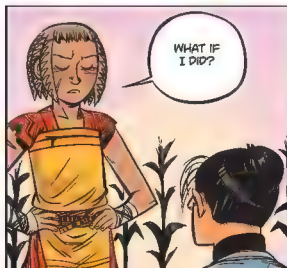
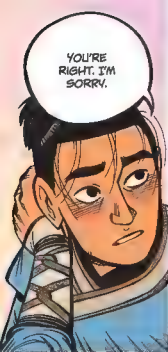


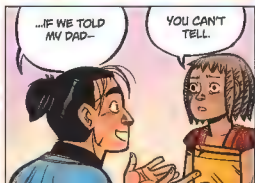
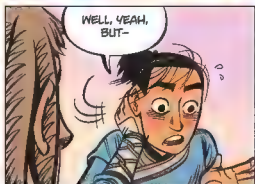
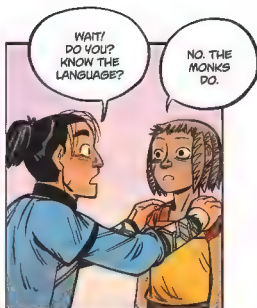
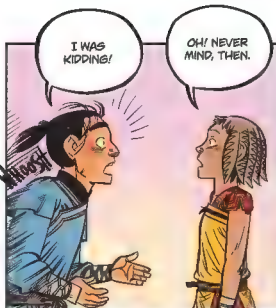
KAI, I LIVE HERE TOO.



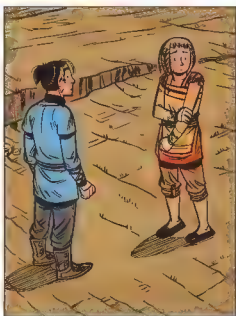
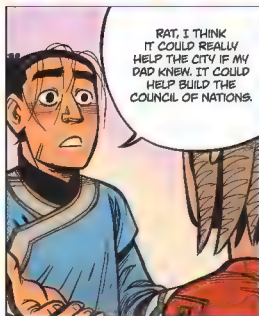
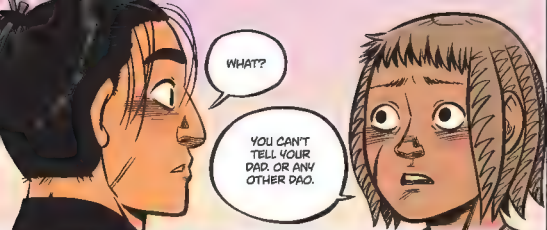
I WANT THINGS TO CHANGE IN THE NAMELESS CITY.

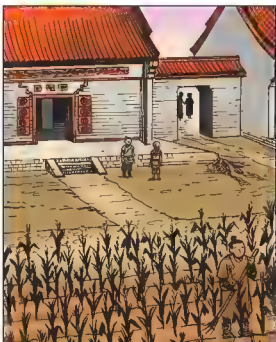
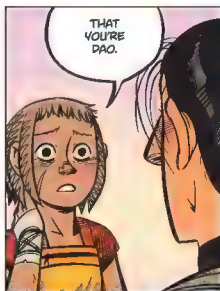
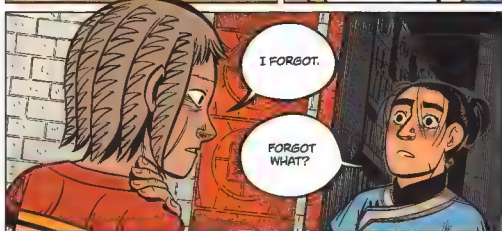


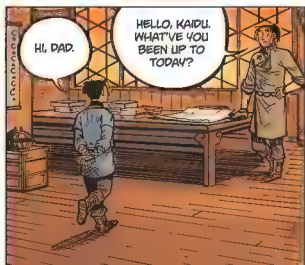
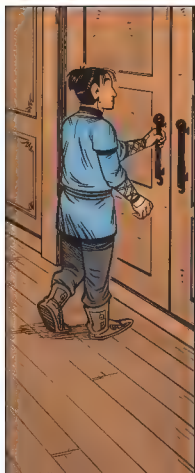
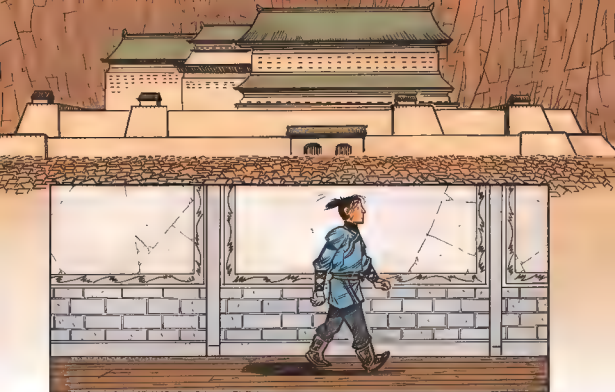












HI, DAD.

HELLO, KAIDU.  
WHAT'VE YOU  
BEEN UP TO  
TODAY?



HANGING OUT  
WITH RAT.

AH, GOOD.  
I'M GLAD  
YOU HAVE  
A FRIEND.

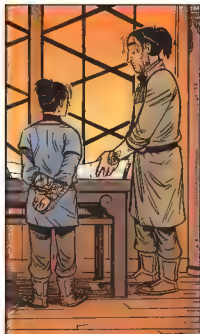


EVEN IF YOU DID  
REPEATEDLY BREAK  
THE RULES AND  
SNEAK OUT OF  
THE PALACE TO  
SEE HER.

BUT IT'S  
OKAY IF I GO  
INTO THE CITY BY  
MYSELF NOW.



IT'S NOT  
LIKE YOU'RE  
EVER ABLE TO  
TAKE ME.



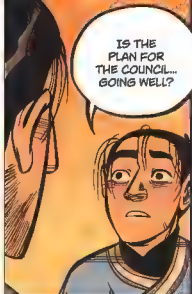
WHAT'S  
ALL THIS?

TRADE  
ROUTE MAPS  
OF THE YISUN  
NATION.

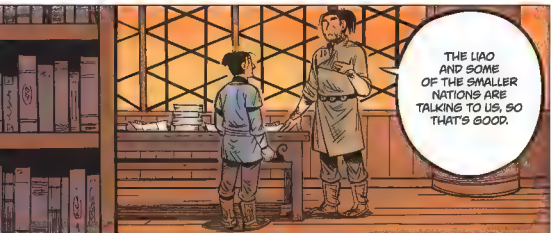
I'M TRYING TO  
FAMILIARIZE MYSELF  
WITH THEIR MAIN  
EXPORTS SO I  
CAN OFFER BETTER  
TERMS FOR THEIR  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE CITY. I'M  
HOPING A LOWER  
PERCENTAGE OF  
TAXATION-



Y'KNOW,  
IT'S REALLY  
BORING.



IS THE  
PLAN FOR  
THE COUNCIL...  
GOING WELL?



THE LIAO  
AND SOME  
OF THE SMALLER  
NATIONS ARE  
TALKING TO US, SO  
THAT'S GOOD.




THE YISUN  
NATION IS STILL  
REFUSING TO  
MEET WITH ME.  
GUESS THEY'RE  
STILL ANGRY WE  
TOOK THE CITY  
FROM THEM  
THIRTY YEARS  
AGO.




YOU WERE A  
PART OF THE DAO  
INVASION OF THE CITY,  
WEREN'T YOU?

YES. SEVENTEEN  
YEARS OLD, MY  
FIRST AND LAST  
REAL BATTLE.




I DIDN'T LIKE IT  
VERY MUCH, TO  
BE HONEST. I WAS  
ALWAYS TERRIBLE  
AT FIGHTING.

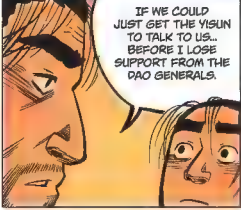
ME TOO.



YOU PROBABLY  
GET THAT FROM  
ME, BECAUSE  
YOUR MOTHER  
CAN BE GENUINELY  
TERRIFYING.



THIS COUNCIL MAY  
HELP US AVOID REPEATING  
THE CYCLE OF INVASION AND  
WAR THAT'S BEEN A PART OF  
CITY LIFE FOR CENTURIES.



IF WE COULD  
JUST GET THE YISUN  
TO TALK TO US...  
BEFORE I LOSE  
SUPPORT FROM THE  
DAO GENERALS.



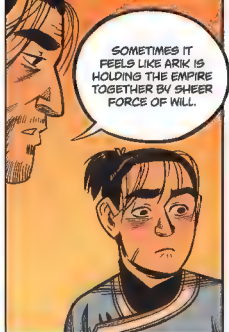
BUT THE  
GENERAL OF ALL BLADES  
SUPPORTS YOU.

YOU'RE RIGHT,  
HE DOES. BUT EVEN  
IF ARIK IS IN FAVOR  
OF MY PLAN, HE  
NEEDS THE SUPPORT  
OF HIS GENERALS  
AND THE TRIBE  
LEADERS.

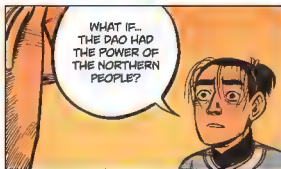




THE DAO ARE A  
FRACTURED PEOPLE.  
SO MANY TRIBES  
FIGHTING FOR THEIR  
OWN NEEDS.



SOMETIMES IT  
FEELS LIKE ARIK IS  
HOLDING THE EMPIRE  
TOGETHER BY SHEER  
FORCE OF WILL.

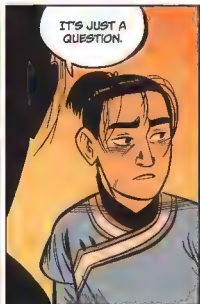


WHAT IF...  
THE DAO HAD  
THE POWER OF  
THE NORTHERN  
PEOPLE?




COULD WE MAKE THE  
YISUN TALK TO US? COULD  
WE MAKE THEM JOIN THE  
COUNCIL OF NATIONS?

KAI DU, WHAT...  
WHERE DID THAT  
QUESTION COME  
FROM?

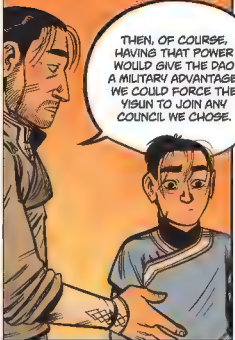


IT'S JUST A  
QUESTION.





IF YOU BELIEVE THE LEGENDS ABOUT THE NORTHERN PEOPLE, THAT THEY POSSESSED A WEAPON THAT ALLOWED THEM TO DOMINATE THE WORLD AND BUILD THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN—

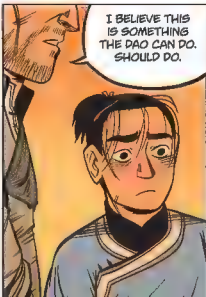


THEN, OF COURSE, HAVING THAT POWER WOULD GIVE THE DAO A MILITARY ADVANTAGE. WE COULD FORCE THE YISUN TO JOIN ANY COUNCIL WE CHOSE.



BUT WE DON'T WANT TO FORCE THEM.

WE WANT—I WANT—THIS COUNCIL TO BE BUILT ON COOPERATION AND PEACE.



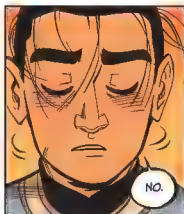
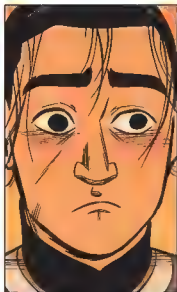
I BELIEVE THIS IS SOMETHING THE DAO CAN DO. SHOULD DO.

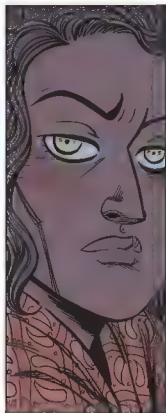
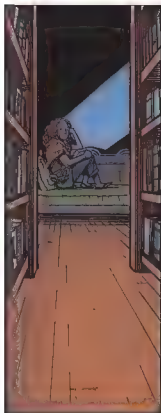
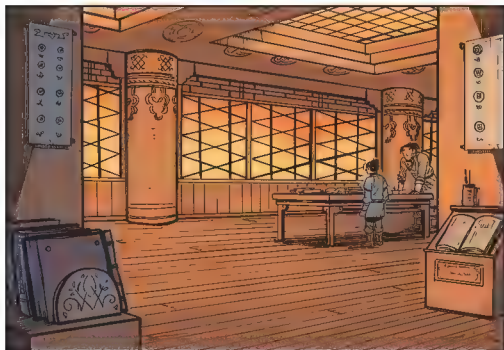


WHY?



BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE TO GO TO WAR WHEN YOU'RE SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.





NEXT MORNING—

—HAVEN'T HAD  
A REAL WAR IN  
THIRTY YEARS!

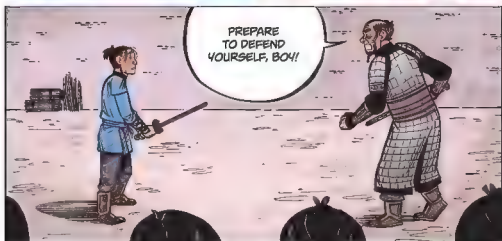
THE WAY YOU  
KIDS FIGHT IS  
PATHETIC! I'VE  
SEEN PUPPIES  
FIGHT HARDER  
OVER A SCRAP  
OF BREAD.

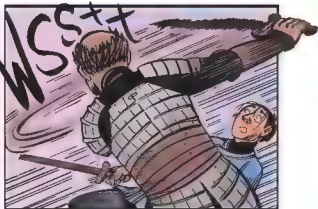
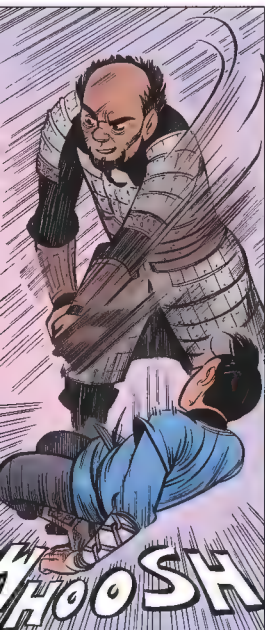
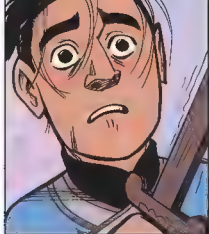


AM I  
BORING  
YOU, SON?

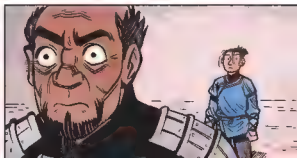
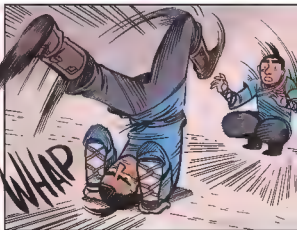
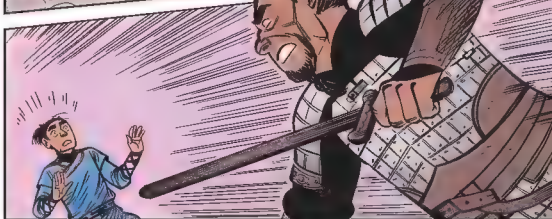
NO,  
SIR!

GET UP HERE,  
BOY. YOU GET TO  
BE MY SPARRING  
PARTNER TODAY.













YOU SURE  
YOU'RE DAO, BOY?  
YOU AIN'T ACTING  
LIKE ONE.



WHAT  
ARE DAO  
SUPPOSED  
TO ACT  
LIKE?



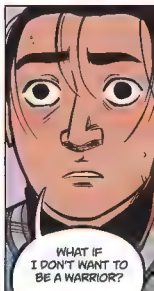
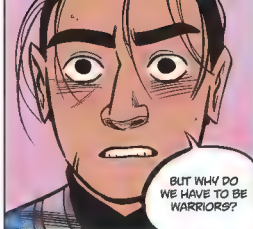
WE'RE  
WARRIORS.

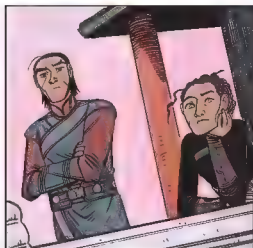
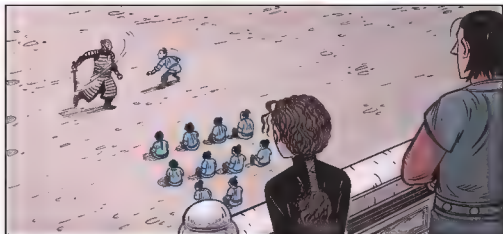


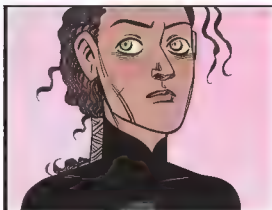
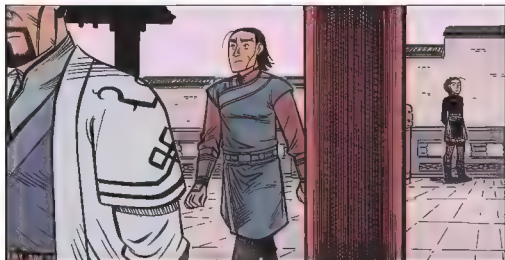
WHY?

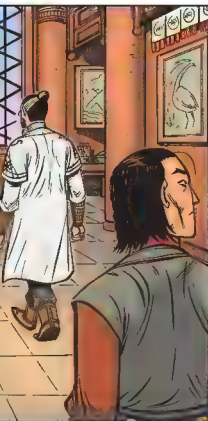
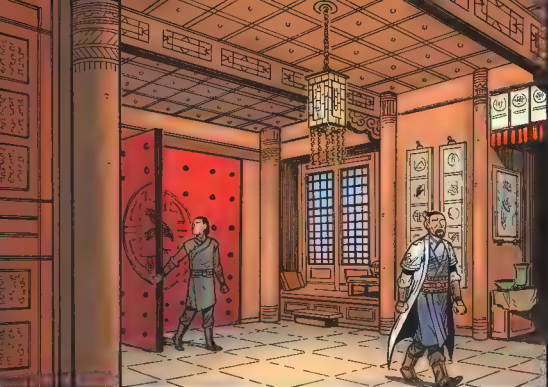


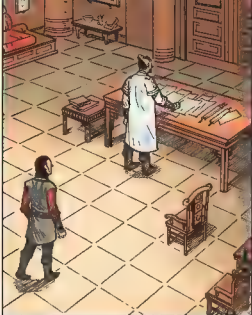
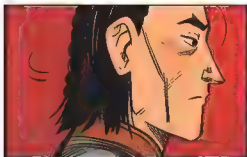
BECAUSE  
THAT'S  
WHAT WE  
ARE!











I KNOW YOU'VE  
BEEN FRUSTRATED  
THESE LAST FEW  
MONTHS.

THAT YOU  
FEEL LIKE  
YOU'RE BEING  
PUSHED TO  
THE SIDE.



YOU HAVE  
NO IDEA  
WHAT I  
FEEL.



SINCE I WAS  
A CHILD, EVERY  
THOUGHT YOU  
PUT IN MY HEAD  
WAS THAT I  
WOULD SOMEDAY  
RULE THE CITY.



IF THAT IS  
NO LONGER MY  
PURPOSE, THEN  
WHAT IS?



YOU WILL  
BE A PART  
OF THIS NEW  
PATH FOR THE  
DAO IN THE  
NAMELESS  
CITY.



AND I AM  
JUST SUPPOSED  
TO ACCEPT THAT  
YOU'VE CHANGED  
MY FUTURE  
COMPLETELY?

I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
WHY YOU'RE  
DOING THIS!



YOU ARE  
THE LEADER  
OF THE DAO  
EMPIRE. THE  
WORLD IS  
YOURS TO  
COMMAND.

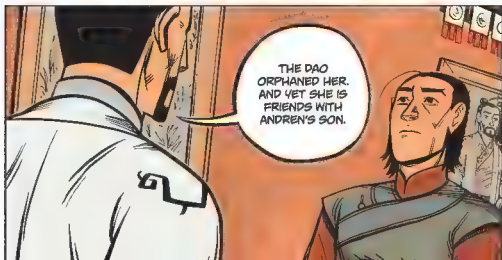


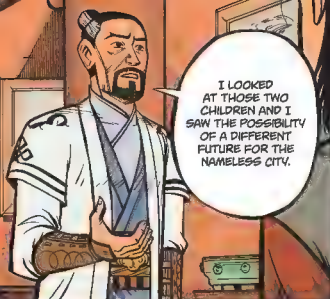
WHY  
ARE YOU  
CHOOSING  
TO THROW  
IT ALL  
AWAY?



MANY  
REASONS,  
ERZI.







I LOOKED  
AT THOSE TWO  
CHILDREN AND I  
SAW THE POSSIBILITY  
OF A DIFFERENT  
FUTURE FOR THE  
NAMELESS CITY.



WHAT AM I  
TO YOU?



YOU'RE  
MY SON.

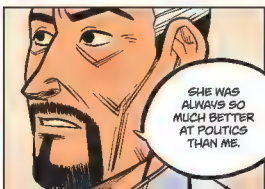
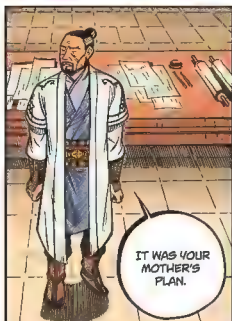


NO. I'M A TOOL  
TO BE USED OR  
THROWN AWAY AS  
YOU SEE FIT.



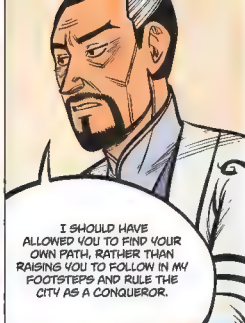
I WAS BORN IN  
THE CITY SO I  
COULD HAVE THE  
RIGHT TO CLAIM  
IT AS MY OWN.

SO I WOULDN'T BE LIKE  
YOU, A CONQUEROR IN  
THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE  
WHO LIVED HERE. I WOULD  
BE ONE OF THEM.





I AM  
SORRY,  
ERZI.



I SHOULD HAVE  
ALLOWED YOU TO FIND YOUR  
OWN PATH, RATHER THAN  
RAISING YOU TO FOLLOW IN MY  
FOOTSTEPS AND RULE THE  
CITY AS A CONQUEROR.

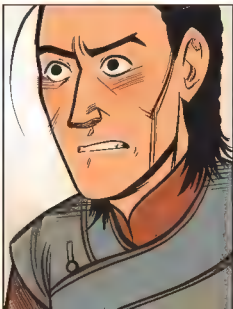
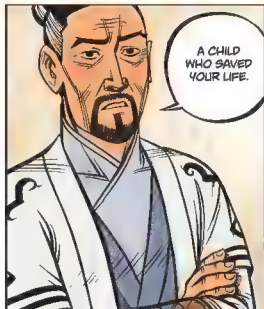


I SHOULD HAVE  
BELIEVED IN A  
BETTER FUTURE  
FOR YOU.



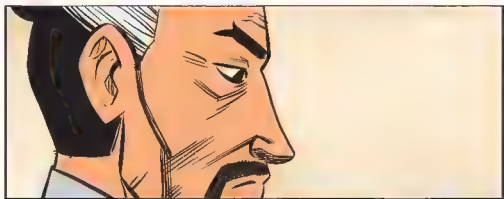
I HAVE MADE  
MISTAKES, BUT  
YOU ARE STILL  
MY SON.





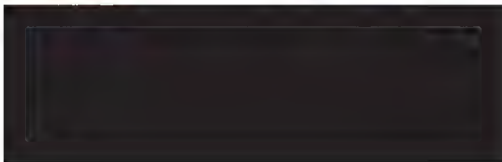
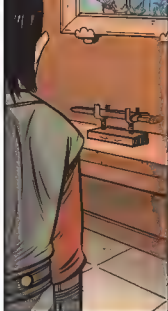


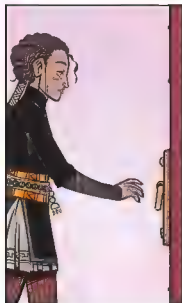
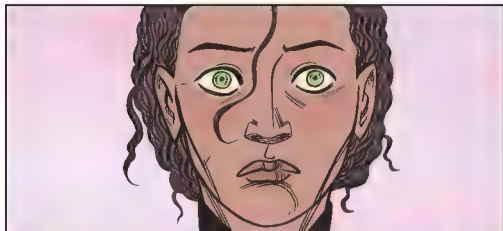


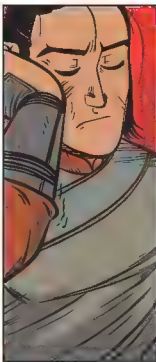
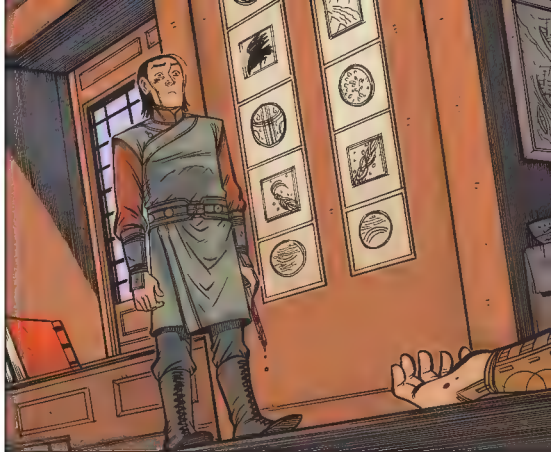




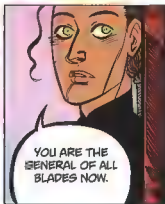
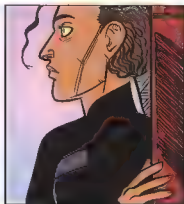
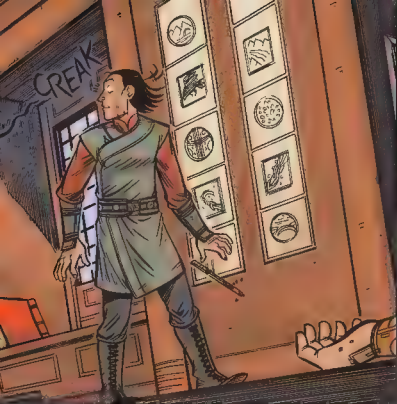


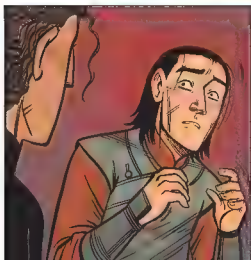


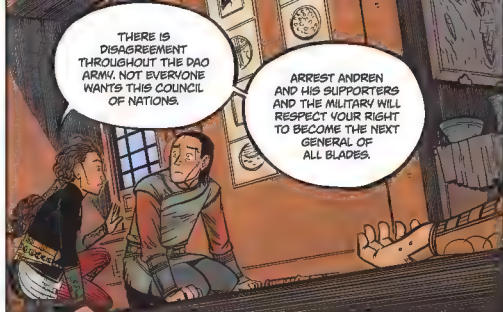












THERE IS  
DISAGREEMENT  
THROUGHOUT THE DAO  
ARMY. NOT EVERYONE  
WANTS THIS COUNCIL  
OF NATIONS.

ARREST ANDREN  
AND HIS SUPPORTERS  
AND THE MILITARY WILL  
RESPECT YOUR RIGHT  
TO BECOME THE NEXT  
GENERAL OF  
ALL BLADES.

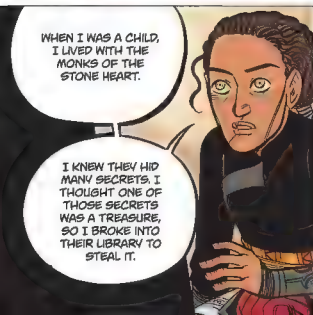


ANDREN HAS TOO  
MUCH SUPPORT, IT'LL  
MEAN CIVIL WAR—

NOT IF YOU HAVE A  
WEAPON TO KEEP DAO  
REBELS IN LINE.



A WEAPON?

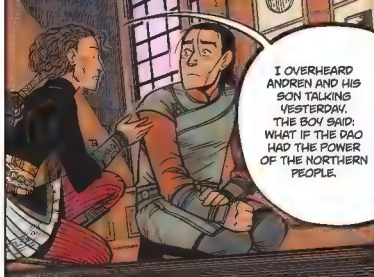


WHEN I WAS A CHILD,  
I LIVED WITH THE  
MONKS OF THE  
STONE HEART.

I KNEW THEY HID  
MANY SECRETS. I  
THOUGHT ONE OF  
THOSE SECRETS  
WAS A TREASURE,  
SO I BROKE INTO  
THEIR LIBRARY TO  
STEAL IT.



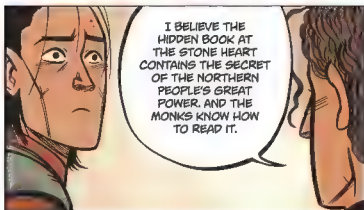
BUT THERE WAS  
NOTHING IN THE LIBRARY  
BUT AN UNDERGROUND ROOM  
CONTAINING A SINGLE BOOK,  
FILLED WITH THE WRITING OF  
THE NORTHERN PEOPLE.



I OVERHEARD  
ANDREN AND HIS  
SON TALKING  
YESTERDAY.  
THE BOY SAID:  
WHAT IF THE DAO  
HAD THE POWER  
OF THE NORTHERN  
PEOPLE.



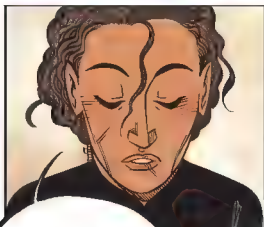
I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND.



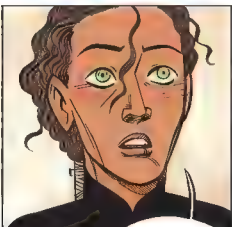
I BELIEVE THE  
HIDDEN BOOK AT  
THE STONE HEART  
CONTAINS THE SECRET  
OF THE NORTHERN  
PEOPLE'S GREAT  
POWER. AND THE  
MONKS KNOW HOW  
TO READ IT.



WHY...  
WHY  
WOULD YOU THINK  
THAT?

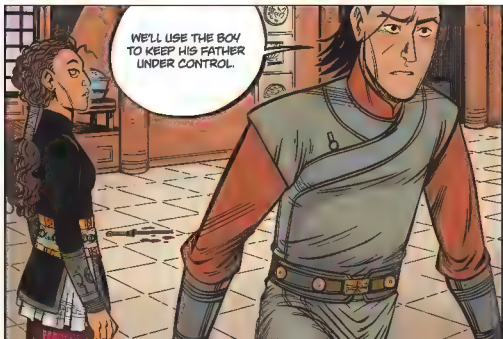
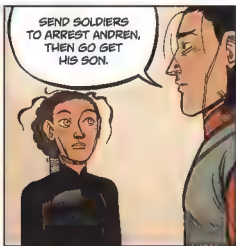
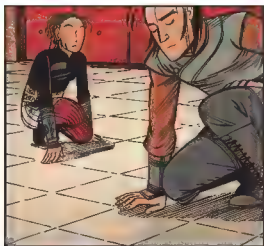
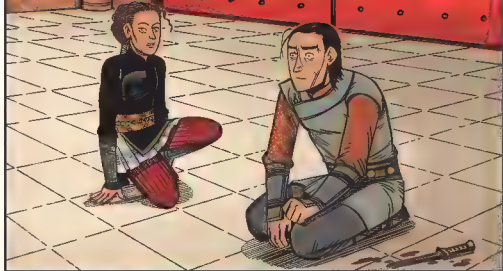


THE MONKS  
ARE THE KEEPERS OF  
THE CITY'S KNOWLEDGE.  
THEY BELIEVE IN SHARING  
THAT KNOWLEDGE WITH  
ANYONE WHO SEEKS IT.



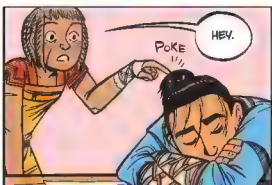
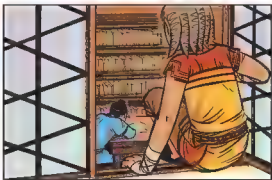
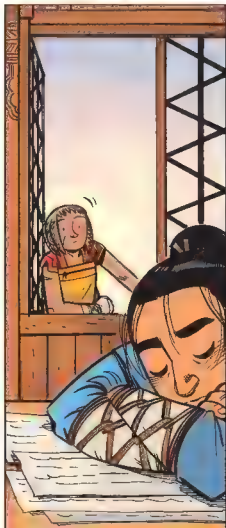
WHY WOULD  
THEY HIDE A  
BOOK THEY  
DIDN'T KNOW  
HOW TO READ?

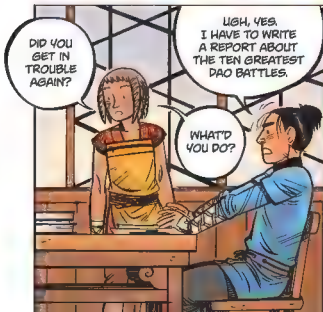
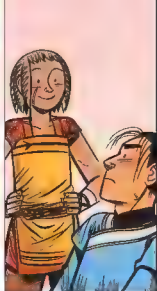
UNLESS THEY  
KNEW WHAT IT  
CONTAINED, AND  
WERE AFRAID OF  
ITS POWER.

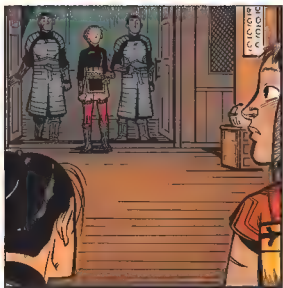
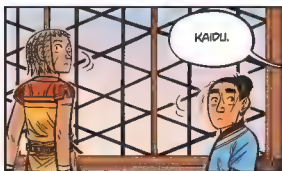


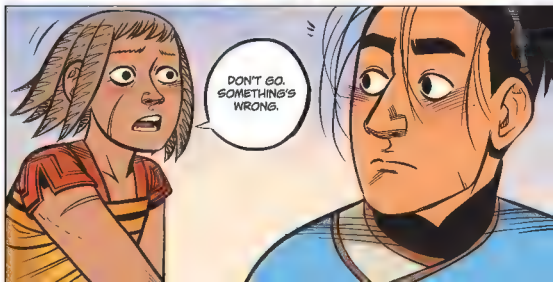
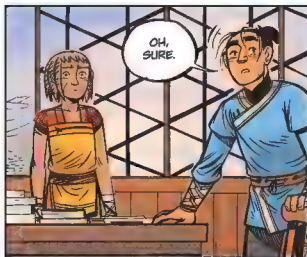
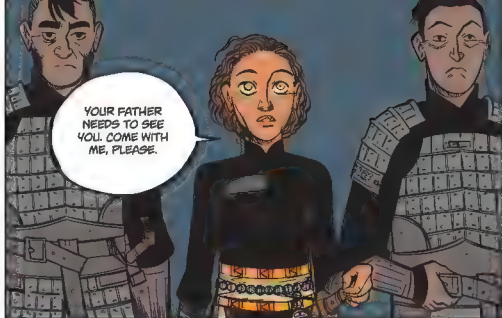


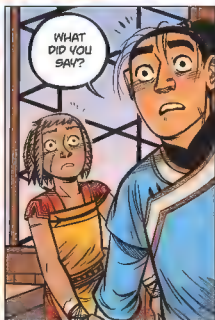
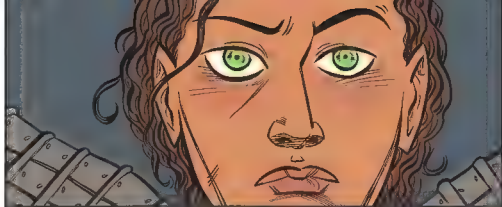


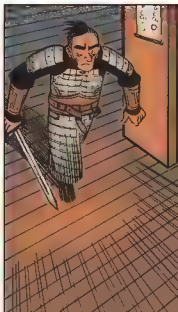
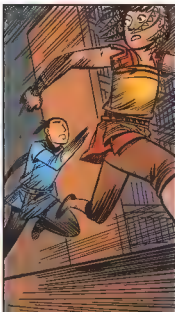
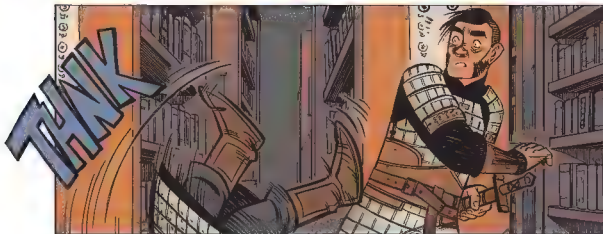
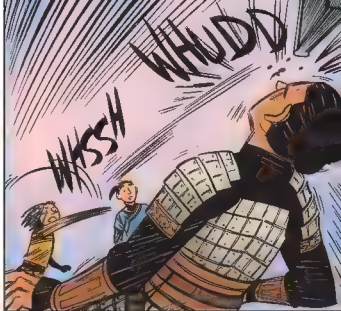






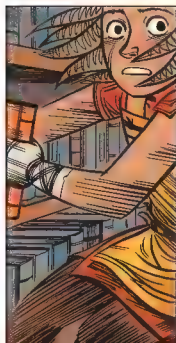
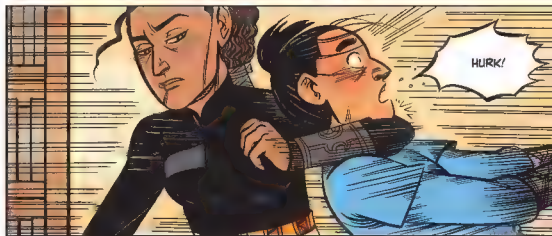


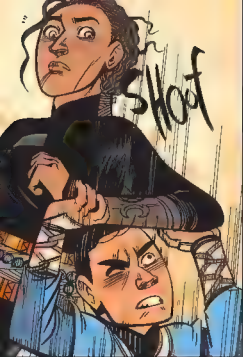


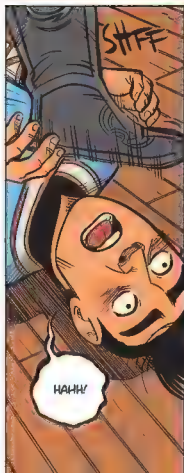


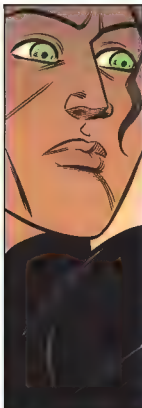


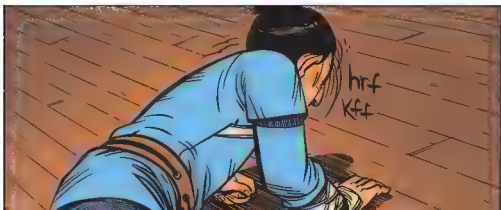
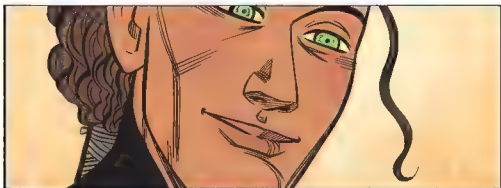
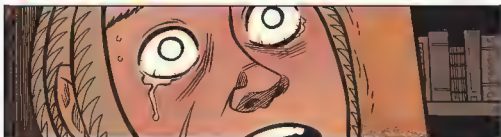




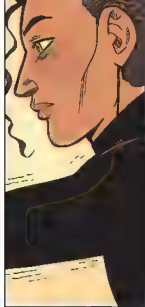
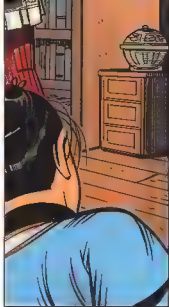




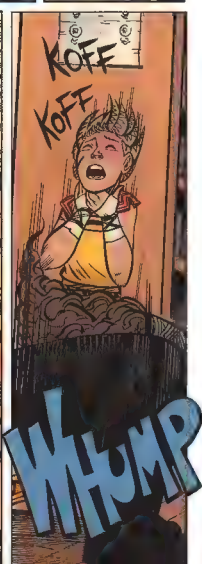






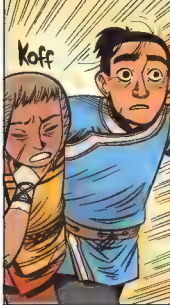
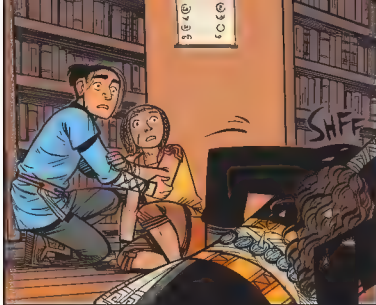


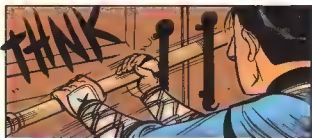
**KRASH**

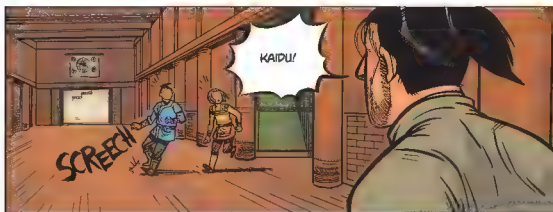
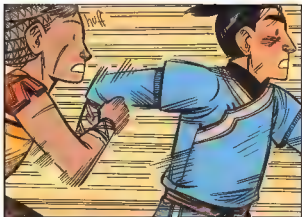



KOFF  
KOFF

**WHOMP**









ERZI HAS KILLED  
HIS FATHER AND TAKEN  
CONTROL OF THE MILITARY.  
HE'S ARRESTING ANYONE  
WHO OPPOSES HIM.



I NEVER  
LIKED  
THAT BOY.  
APPARENTLY  
THE FEELING  
IS MUTUAL.



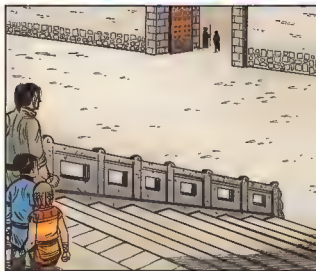
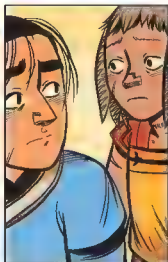
THE GENERAL  
OF ALL BLADES  
...IS DEAD?



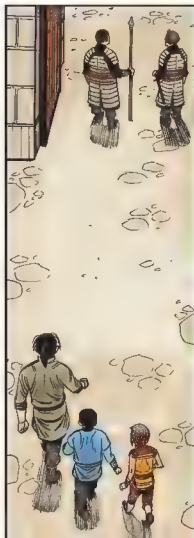
YES. AND NOW  
WE MUST LEAVE  
THE CITY.



DAD...THERE'S  
BLOOD ON  
YOUR COAT.









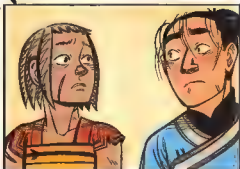
BONNG BONNG BONNG



THAT'S THE  
ALARM TO CLOSE  
THE GATES.

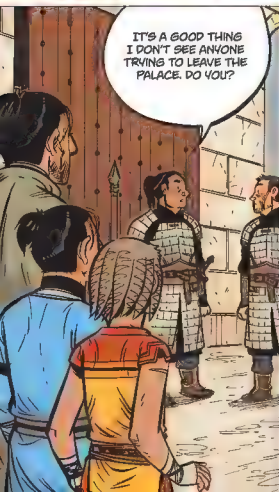


BONNG



...AND  
ARREST ANYONE  
TRYING TO LEAVE  
THE PALACE.





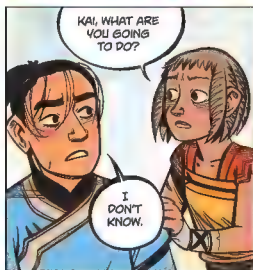
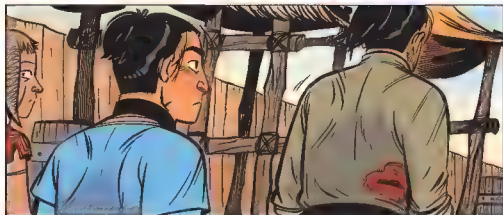
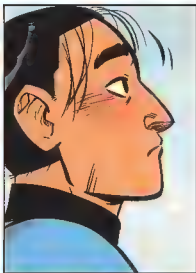
IT'S A GOOD THING  
I DON'T SEE ANYONE  
TRYING TO LEAVE THE  
PALACE. DO YOU?



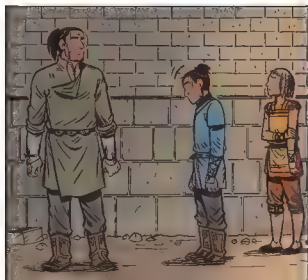
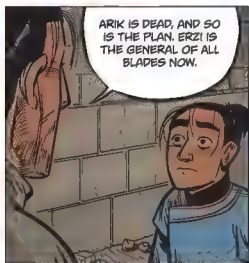
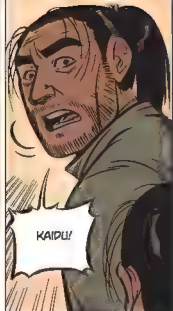
NO.

I DON'T  
SEE  
ANYONE.

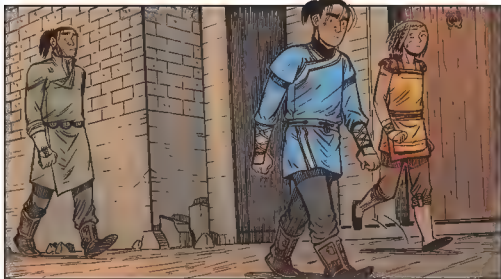




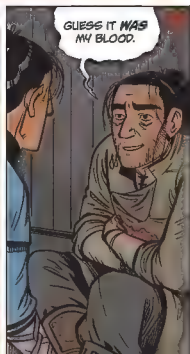
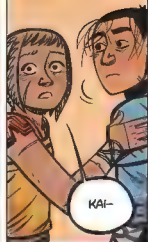
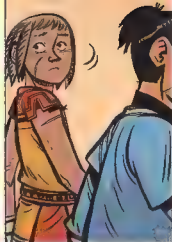
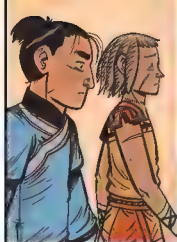


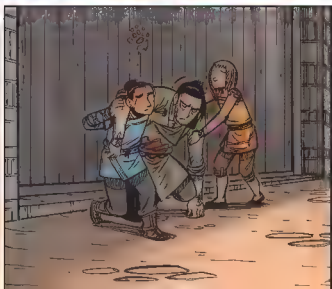


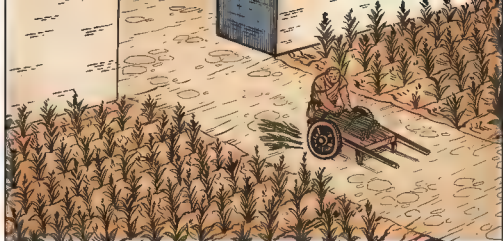


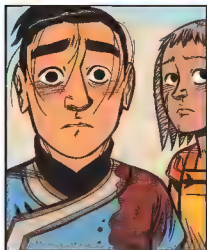


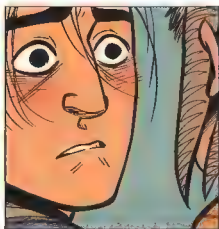
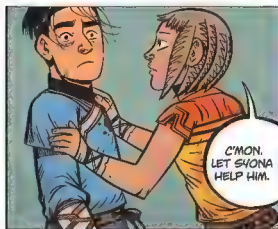
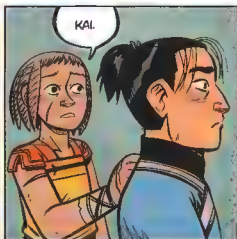
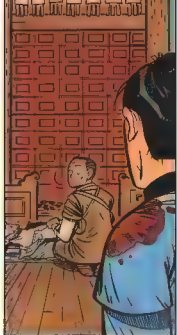


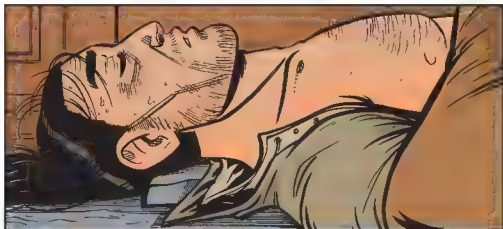




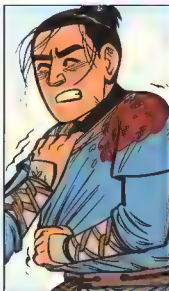




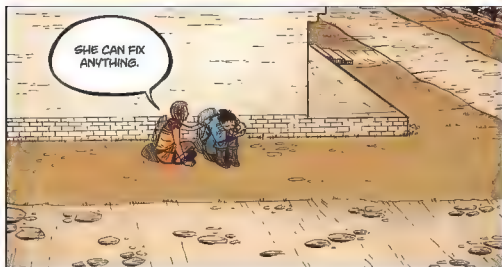
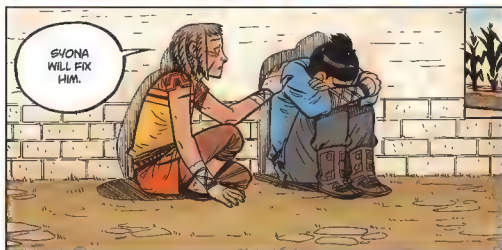
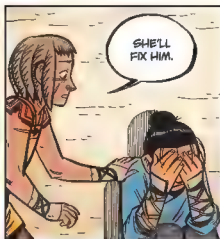


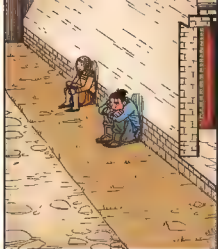
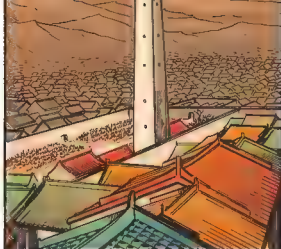


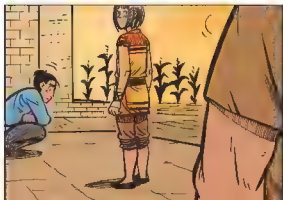
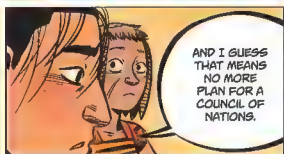


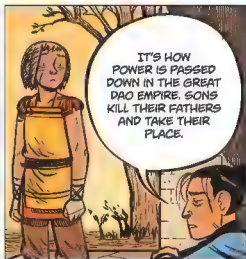
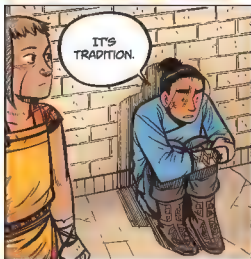
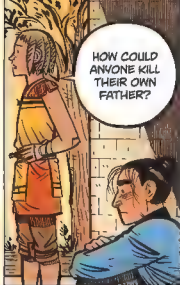


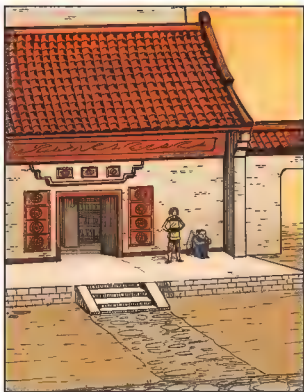


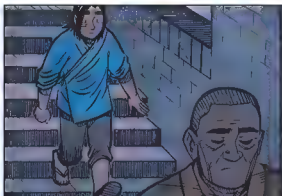
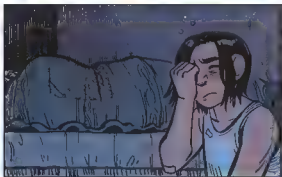
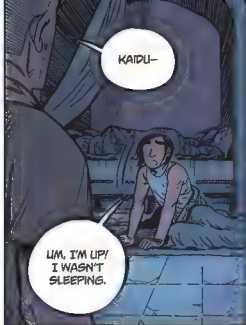














I TOLD YOU TO  
LEAVE THE CITY.



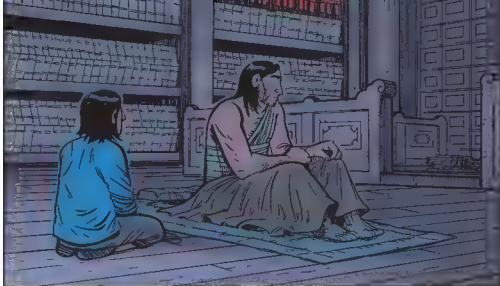
I KNOW.  
I'M SORRY.

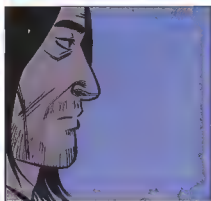


STOP APOLOGIZING. YOU  
SHOULD HAVE DONE WHAT  
I TOLD YOU TO DO! YOU  
NEVER LISTEN, KAIDU.







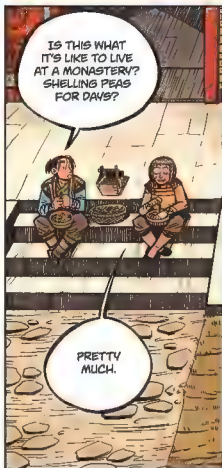




TWO DAYS LATER-



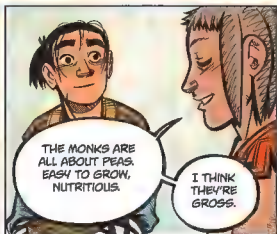
IS THIS WHAT  
IT'S LIKE TO LIVE  
AT A MONASTERY?  
SHELLING PEAS  
FOR DAYS?



PRETTY  
MUCH.

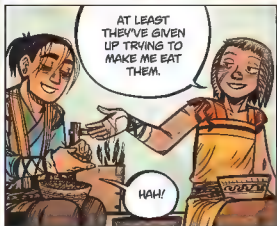
THE MONKS ARE  
ALL ABOUT PEAS.  
EASY TO GROW,  
NUTRITIOUS.

I THINK  
THEY'RE  
GROSS.



AT LEAST  
THEY'VE GIVEN  
UP TRYING TO  
MAKE ME EAT  
THEM.

HAH!

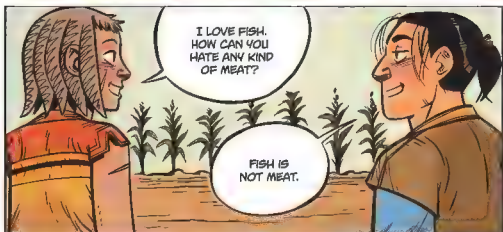




I HATE  
EATING FISH.  
BUT WHEN I LIVED  
WITH MY MOM, IF  
THAT'S WHAT WE  
HAD FOR SUPPER,  
I HAD TO EAT IT.  
NO ARGUMENTS.



Y'KNOW, "THERE  
ARE STARVING LIAO  
KIDS WHO'D LOVE FISH  
FOR SUPPER, SO CLEAN  
YOUR PLATE, KAIDU."



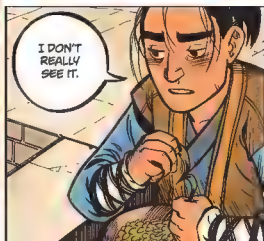
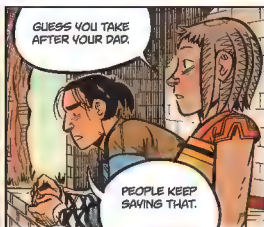
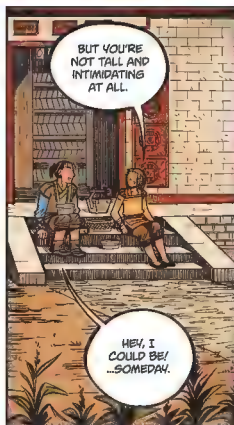
I LOVE FISH.  
HOW CAN YOU  
HATE ANY KIND  
OF MEAT?

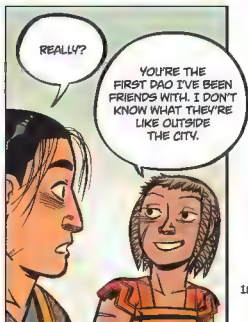
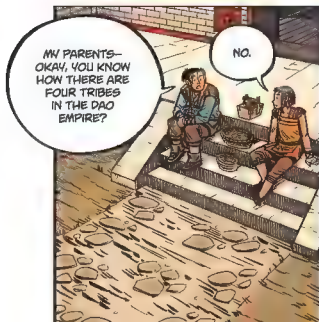
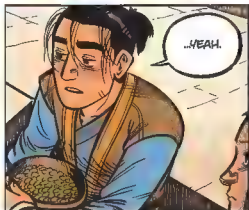
FISH IS  
NOT MEAT.

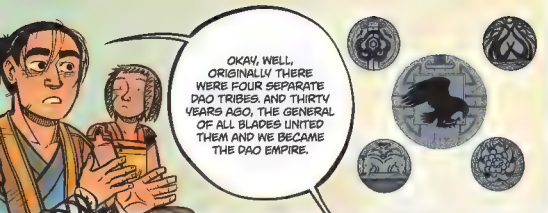


WHAT'S YOUR  
MOM LIKE?









OKAY, WELL,  
ORIGINALLY THERE  
WERE FOUR SEPARATE  
DAO TRIBES. AND THIRTY  
YEARS AGO, THE GENERAL  
OF ALL BLADES UNITED  
THEM AND WE BECAME  
THE DAO EMPIRE.



MY GRANDFATHER  
WAS THE LEADER  
OF THE LARGEST  
DAO TRIBE.

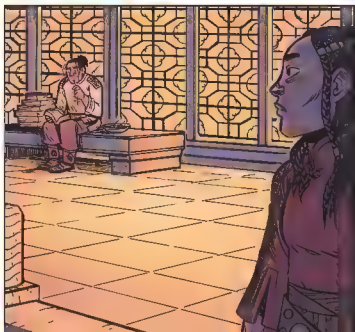
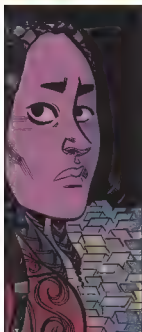
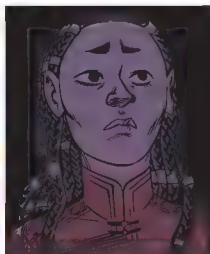
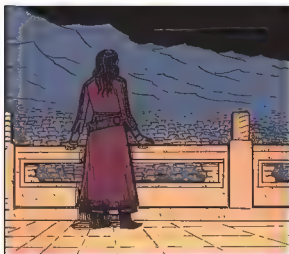


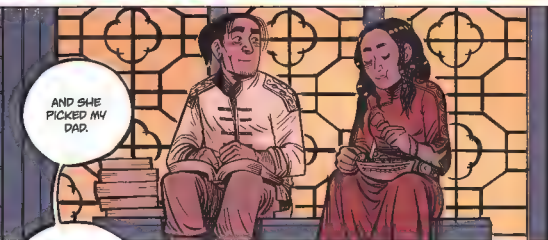
A FEW YEARS BEFORE  
I WAS BORN, THE GENERAL OF  
ALL BLADES WAS WORRIED THAT  
MY GRANDFATHER'S TRIBE WAS  
GOING TO LEAVE THE  
DAO EMPIRE.



SO HE SAID  
MY MOTHER, MY  
GRANDFATHER'S ONLY  
DAUGHTER, HAD TO  
MARRY A GENERAL WHO  
WAS LOYAL TO HIM.





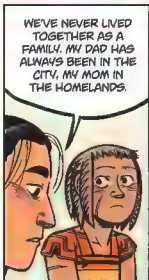


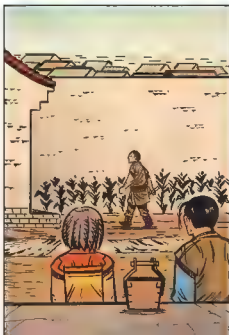
AND SHE  
PICKED MY  
DAD.

IT'S WEIRD.  
THE ONLY  
REASON I WAS  
BORN WAS  
BECAUSE OF  
A MILITARY  
TREATY.

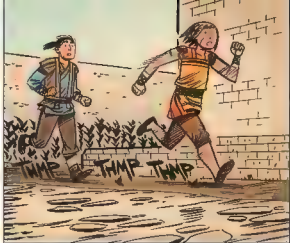
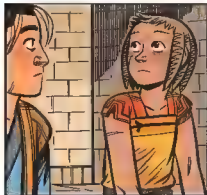
WE'VE NEVER LIVED  
TOGETHER AS A  
FAMILY. MY DAD HAS  
ALWAYS BEEN IN THE  
CITY, MY MOM IN  
THE HOMELANDS.

I DON'T KNOW IF  
THEY EVER LOVED  
EACH OTHER.



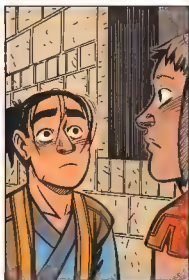




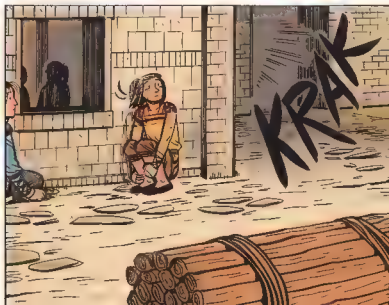
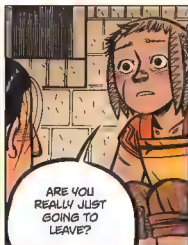


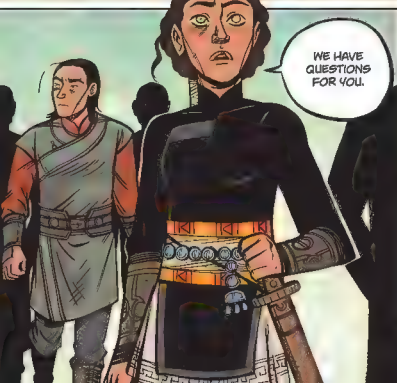
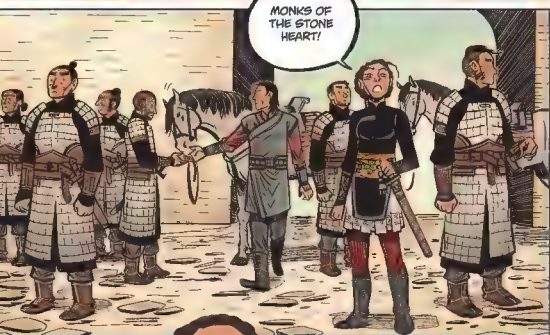
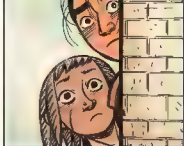
THE YISUN  
ARMY IS  
MARCHING ON  
THE CITY?

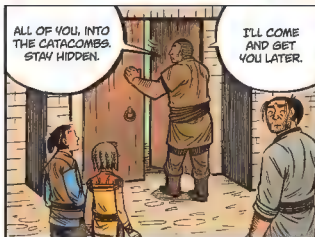
THEY'RE FOUR  
DAYS AWAY,  
APPARENTLY.

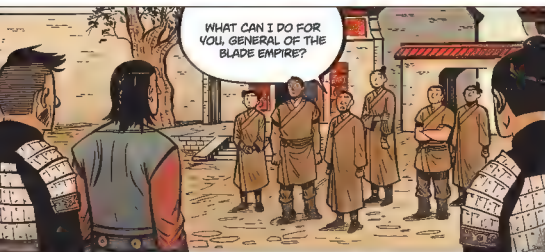


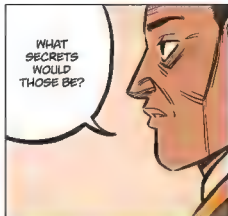













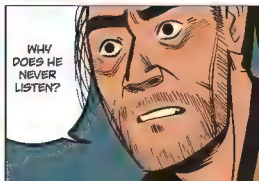
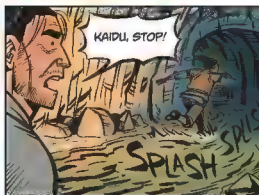
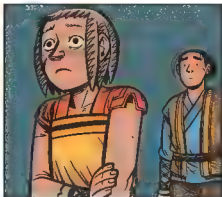


THE FIRST BUILDERS  
CHOSE TO LET  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
OF THEIR POWER  
FADE FROM  
THE WORLD.

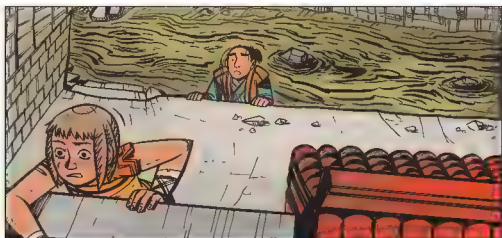
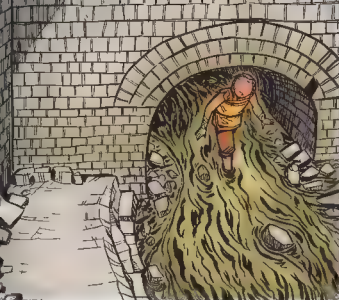
THIS PATH MAY  
DESTROY YOU AND  
YOUR EMPIRE.

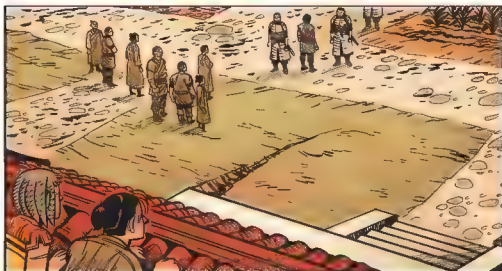
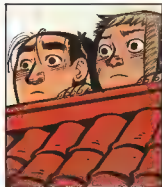


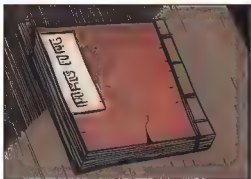
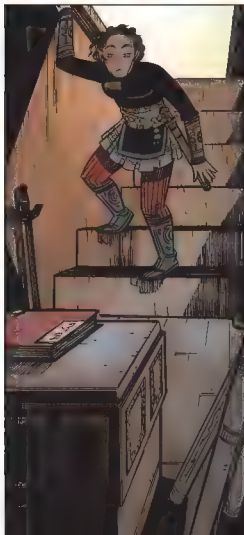
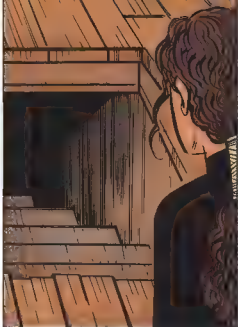




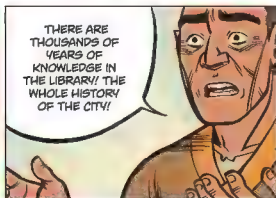
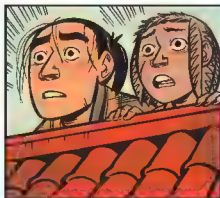


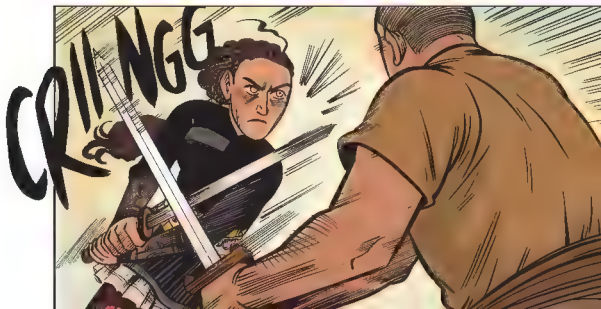










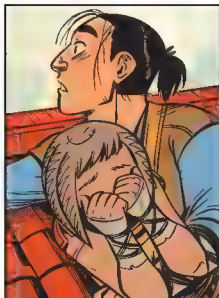
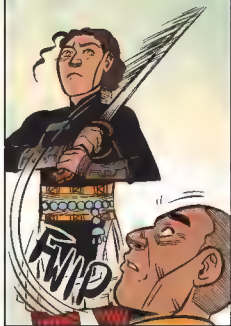


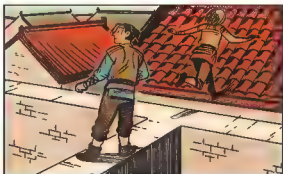
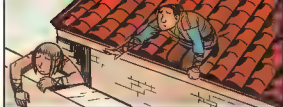
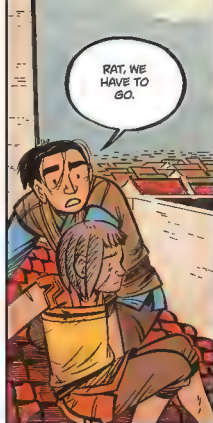






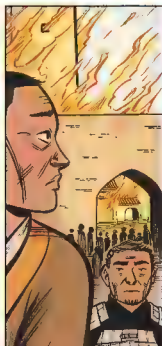
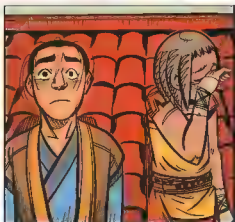
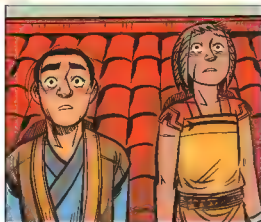
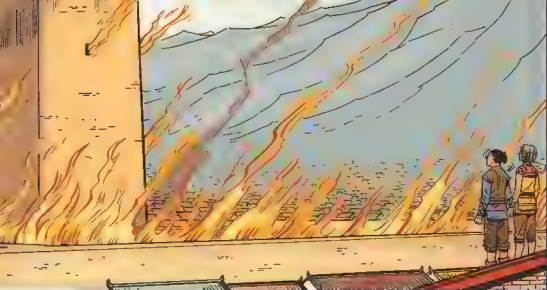






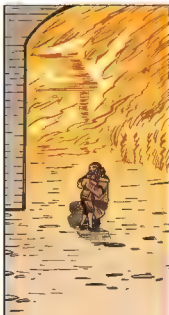
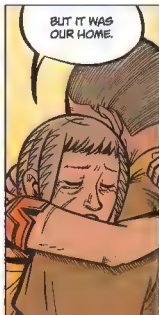
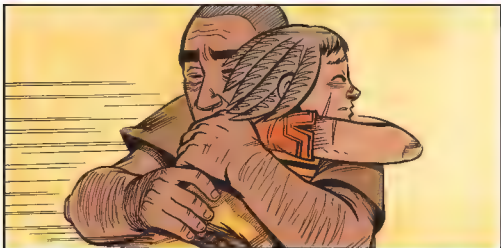


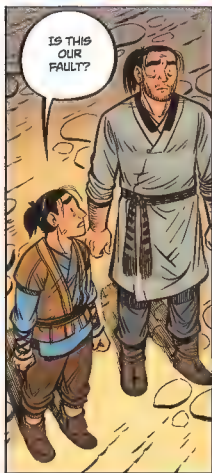
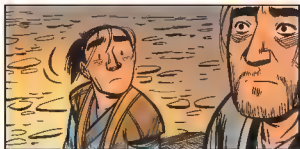
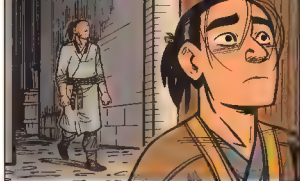


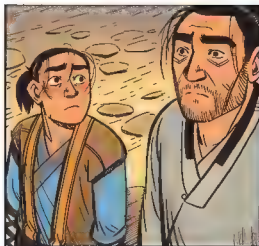








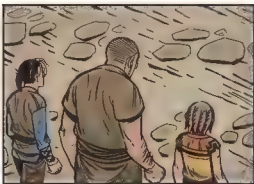
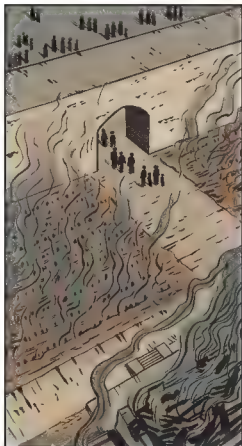


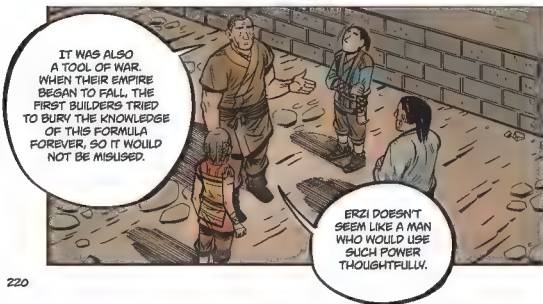
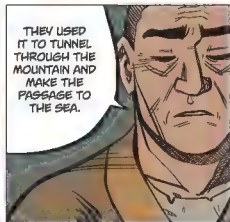


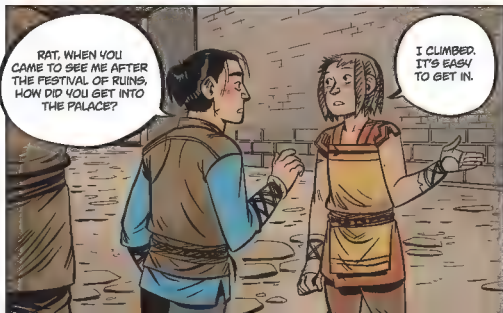


HOURS LATER—

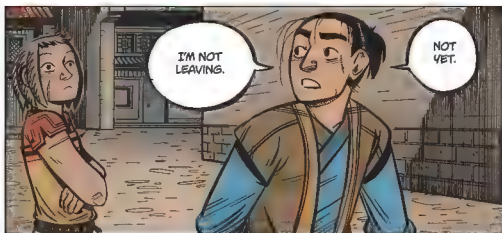




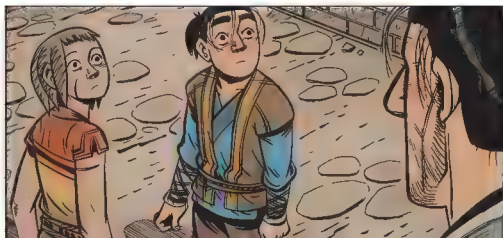
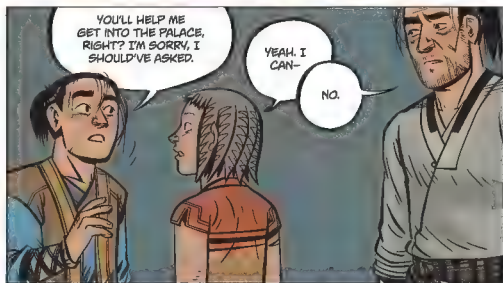




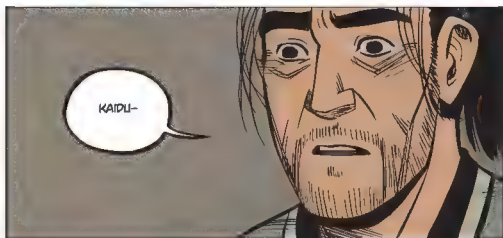
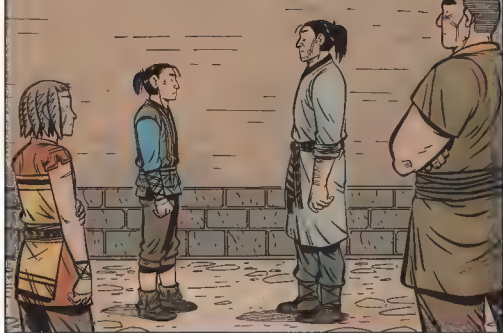






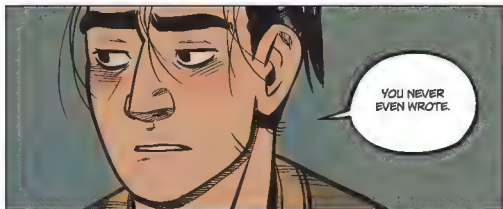








I'D NEVER  
EVEN MET YOU UNTIL  
I CAME TO THE CITY!  
YOU NEVER CAME BACK  
TO THE HOMELANDS  
TO SEE ME!



YOU NEVER  
EVEN WROTE.



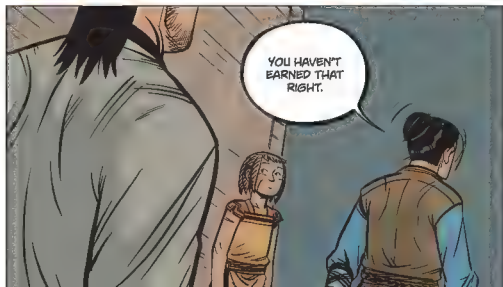
I HAD-I WAS  
SO BUSY, THERE  
WERE SO MANY  
THINGS...



THINGS MORE  
IMPORTANT  
THAN ME.



AT THE  
TIME THEY  
WERE.





THERE IS  
SOMETHING ELSE  
TO CONSIDER.



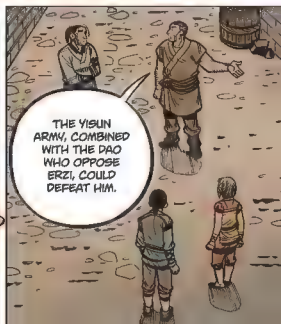
THE YISUN  
ARMY IS NOT FAR  
FROM THE CITY.



YOU'VE BEEN  
TRYING TO TALK  
TO THE YISUN FOR  
MONTHS. WHY NOT  
GO AND MEET WITH  
THEM IN PERSON?



IF THE CHILDREN  
CAN STEAL BACK THE  
MANUAL OF DIVIDED  
EARTH, ERZI WILL  
LOSE HIS MILITARY  
ADVANTAGE.



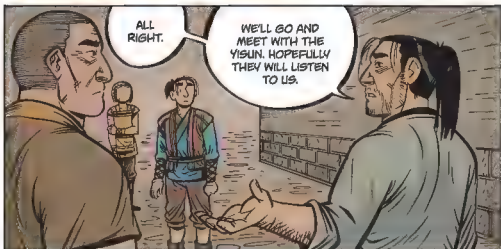
THE YISUN  
ARMY, COMBINED  
WITH THE DAO  
WHO OPPOSE  
ERZI, COULD  
DEFEAT HIM.





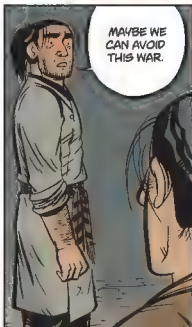


YOU'RE  
A LOT LIKE  
YOUR MOTHER.



ALL  
RIGHT.

WE'LL GO AND  
MEET WITH THE  
YISUN. HOPEFULLY  
THEY WILL LISTEN  
TO US.



MAYBE WE  
CAN AVOID  
THIS WAR.







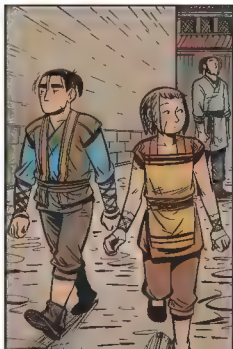
I...HOPE  
YOU DON'T  
HATE ME.



I DON'T.



THINGS AREN'T  
OKAY, BUT MAYBE  
THEY WILL BE  
SOMEDAY.

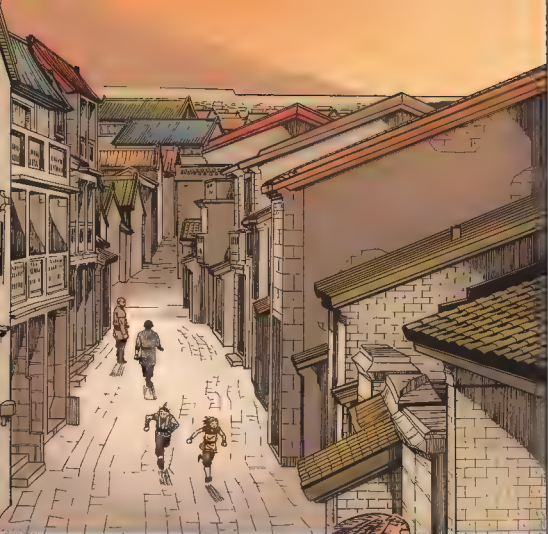


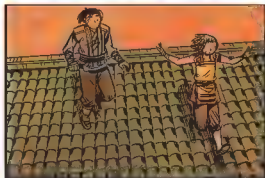
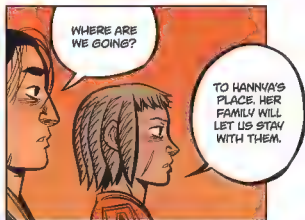
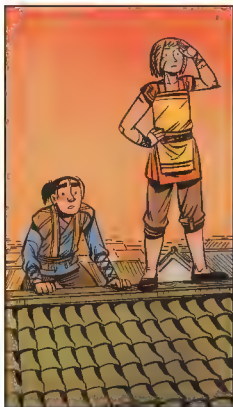
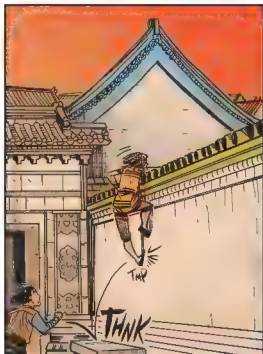
RAT.

TAKE CARE  
OF HIM.  
PLEASE.

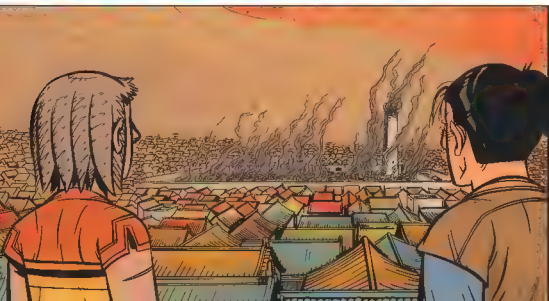
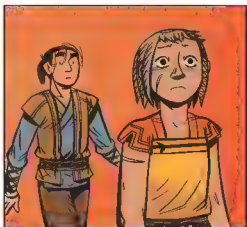


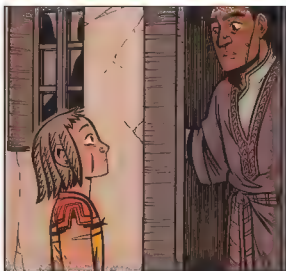
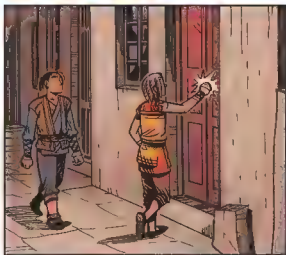
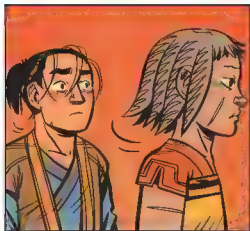
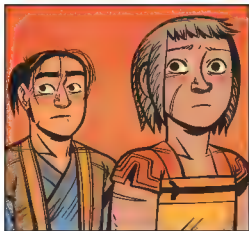
I  
ALWAYS  
DO.

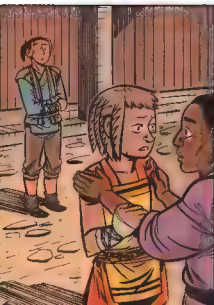


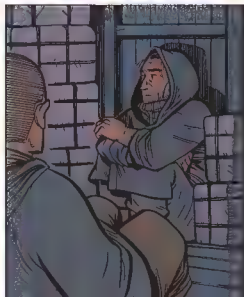
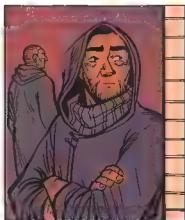
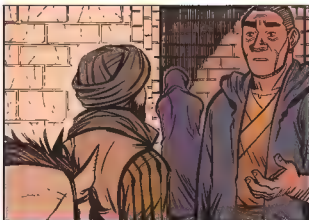


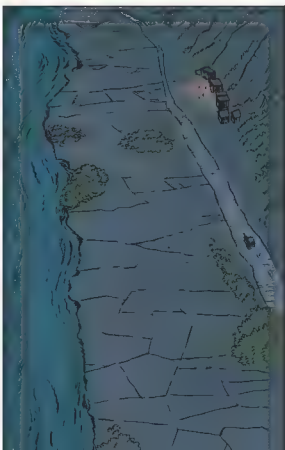
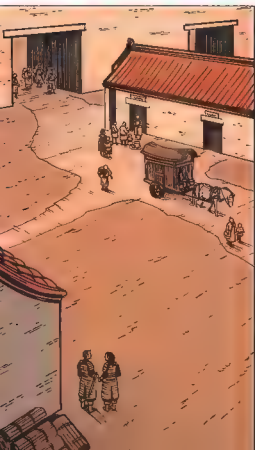
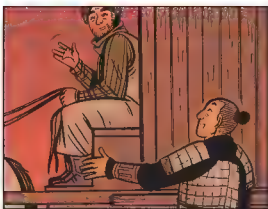














WHAT  
IS IT?

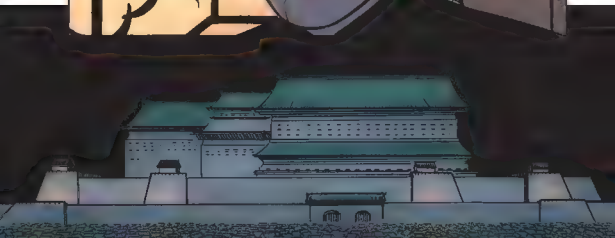
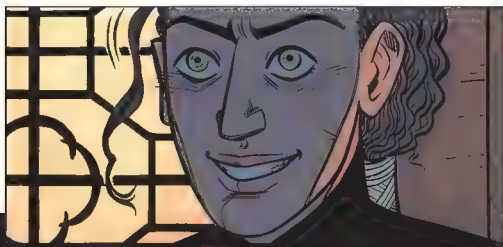
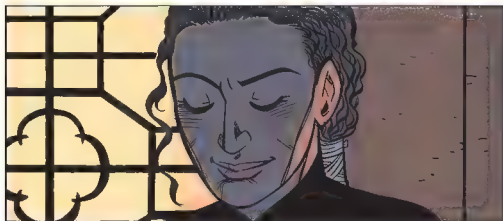
NOTHING.  
JUST...

A large black and white illustration showing a wide view of a city from a high vantage point. A path leads down from the foreground towards the city. In the distance, a large, rounded structure, possibly a pagoda or a hill, is visible. The city is filled with many small figures, suggesting a large population. The foreground is filled with dense foliage.

THE LAST TIME  
I SAW THE CITY  
LIKE THIS, I WAS  
MARCHING TO  
INVADE IT.









*TO BE CONTINUED IN*

# *THE* **DIVIDED EARTH**

BOOK 3 OF THE NAMELESS CITY SERIES



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

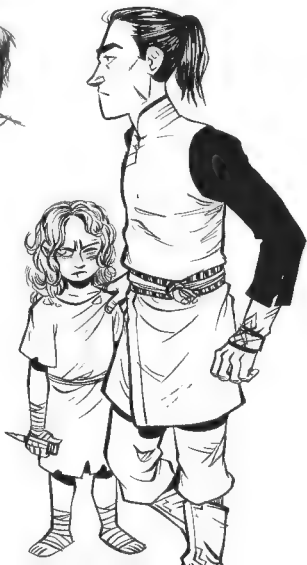
As of this writing, two books in The Nameless City trilogy are complete, and I will soon begin work on the third, where the story of Rat and Kai and the various characters introduced over the past 450 plus pages will (hopefully) find a satisfying ending. The Nameless City has been an unusual and challenging project for me: It's the first trilogy I've both written and drawn on my own and the first comic I've drawn that has not been set in present-day North America (or its post-apocalyptic future). After two graphic novels set in a modern high school (*Friends with Boys* and *Nothing Can Possibly Go Wrong*), I wanted to stretch my drawing muscles, and I settled on creating a comic with thousands of tiled Chinese rooftops. During my darkest times drawing these two (soon to be three) graphic novels, I may have had one or two moments regretting that choice and longing for the easy-to-draw lockers of a modern high school hallway. But they were only moments. For all its challenges, I've greatly enjoyed drawing the complicated world that Rat and Kai inhabit.

The world of The Nameless City is fictional, but its roots are based on thirteenth-century China. There is no "Nameless City" in history, but I drew from my research on the Yuan Dynasty and the Silk Road to create this vast, multicultural place where Kai and Rat live. Hopefully that research gives their home weight and substance. I have tried to create a world that is visually authentic, if not accurate to historical events of the time. There are differences between the real thirteenth-century China and the world of The Nameless City—the history, the language of its people—but I have tried to ground my artwork in that particular time and place. I am grateful to the historical clothing reference books available at the Halifax Public Library (where I did much of my research before moving all the way across Canada to Vancouver, British Columbia), as well as the online photo galleries of libraries across the US and Canada, all of which were a great asset in the years leading up to the creation of this trilogy. Libraries are, as always, a cartoonist's best friend.

CONCEPT ART FOR  
NAMELESS CITY



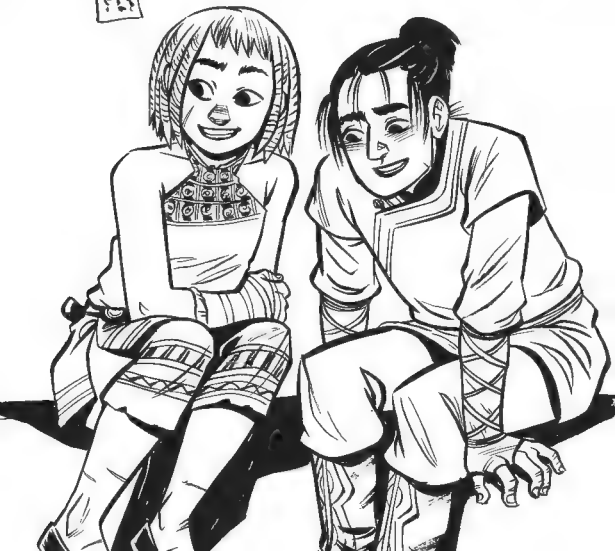
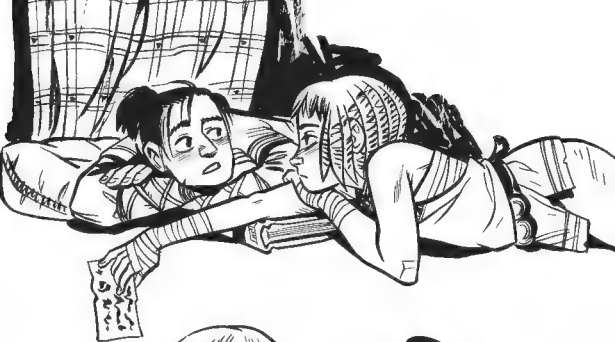






















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Faith Erin Hicks remercie le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 153 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.



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"The artwork is breathtaking . . . lending each panel a richness that appropriately reflects a multifaceted culture."

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